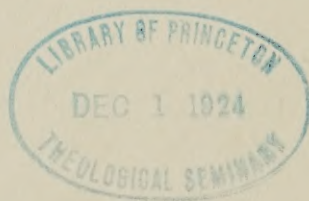



SELECTED THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

OF

DR. HERMAN RUST



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The theological views and
teachings of Dr. Herman



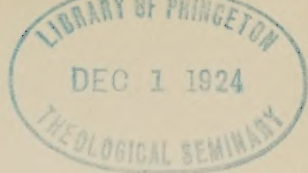
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DR. HERMAN RUST

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By J. B. RUST



A MEMORIAL VOLUME

The Theological Views and Teachings

— OF —

Dr. Herman Rust

Compiled and edited by his son
REV. J. B. RUST, Ph. D., D. D.

TIFFIN, OHIO
COMMERCIAL PRINTING CO.
1924

IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated to the former students, the Ministers, and
Alumni, associated with Heidelberg Theological
Seminary in years gone by in Tiffin, Ohio,
and
Inscribed to the Central Theological Seminary
in Dayton, Ohio,
In affectionate memory of their parents.

JOHN BENJAMIN RUST
MARY KATHERINE RUST
HERMAN SAMUEL RUST
EUGENE CALVIN RUST

D. D. D.
ANNO DOMINI
1924

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Biographical Sketch




EV. HERMAN RUST, D. D., was born on December 8, 1816, in the Free City of Bremen, Germany. He landed in America on March 18, 1841. Part of his education he received in the schools of his native city. He was a baker by trade and worked for a while in Patterson and Hackensack, New Jersey. Returning to New York City, he responded to an urgent call from Dr. John Williamson Nevins, and from Rev. John C. Guldin to study for the Gospel Ministry. He attended Mercersburg College and Theological Seminary, in Mercersburg, Pa., from 1842 to 1849. He was licensed and ordained by Lebanon Classis, at Johnstown, Pa., and installed as pastor of the Millersville Charge, near Lancaster, Pa. By appointment of the Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States, he succeeded Rev. Emanuel V. Gerhart, D. D., in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1851, as pastor of a German missionary congregation. On October 9, 1855, he entered into the marriage relation with Elizabeth, nee Giesy, of Lancaster, Ohio (1822-1902). Elected by the Ohio Synod to the Second Professorship in the Heidelberg Theological Seminary, he moved to Tiffin, Ohio, with his family, in 1862. Dr. Emanuel V. Gerhart and Dr. Moses Kieffer, the latter succeeding the former, were the incumbents of the First Professorship of Theology in the Heidelberg Theological Seminary. When the Second, or German, Professorship was established in the Seminary, Dr. Herman Rust was chosen as the first incumbent. In 1868 the Ohio Synod named his professorship the Chair of Exegetical and Historical Theology. He also served the Second Reformed congregation of Tiffin as acting pastor for twenty-five years. He was an exegete of unusual ability and a pulpit orator of great power. He resigned his professorship in the Seminary in 1902. On August 8, 1905, his long and useful career came to a close.

Among his literary remains he left quite a number of manuscripts on various Theological subjects and on Church History, as well as sermons delivered on special occasions, and a great many sermon outlines. The contents of this memorial volume have been carefully selected by the compiler and editor, from those manuscripts, representative of his father's Theological views and religious convictions, and as a contribution, from the Christian Evangelical standpoint, toward the solution of the overwhelming difficulties of our time.

Heidelberg Theological Seminary, founded in 1850, in Tiffin, Ohio, and the Ursinus School of Theology, founded in Collegeville, Pa., in 1871, entered into a *Compact of Union* in 1907, as: The Central Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States. The present memorial volume grew out of an address delivered by the writer in response to an invitation from the Faculty of the Central Theological Seminary, on December 14, 1916, in Dayton, Ohio, where the Institution is located, in connection with the celebration of the centennial anniversary of the birth of Dr. Herman Rust.

J. B. R.

FOREWORD

S LONG as a man is in active service anywhere in the fields of research and human endeavor he can speak for himself. After he is gone and the place that knew him knows him no more forever, if he was of some worth to the world by contributing to the betterment of mankind through the nobler channels of knowledge, by conscientious and consecrated service as a teacher of men, and by a consistent and forceful Christian example, one must concede it to be an inestimable privilege and a rare opportunity to be permitted to make him speak again through the avenue of his written testimony and the record of his maturer thought.

It is always interesting to possess some acquaintance with a student's method of work, for his methods of study are the approach to, and help one to understand, his achievements. Dr. Herman Rust was a meditative man and a man of few words, habituated to silent contemplative thought to such a degree that he took very little part as a rule in ordinary conversation even at table, because of his absorption in his preparation for the classroom and the pulpit. This was especially the case during the morning hours of the day. After breakfast he immediately withdrew to his study and closed the door against all intruders. At such a juncture it was useless to seek an interview with him concerning trivial matters and interests. The table talk was left to the other members of the family and to visitors or guests. Meditative moods were so thoroughly characteristic of him that he carried his thoughtfulness into the garden, where, in the midst of his physical labor, in which he engaged for the sake of recreation and economy, he wrought out many of his sermons step by step, and mentally reviewed the scope of his lesson periods for his students. At the same time he regarded careful investigation and application in the study as being absolutely necessary for the acquire-

ment of vocational efficiency. He often repeated the saying in the presence of younger persons around him: "Wenn mann Etwas lernen will so muss mann Sitzfleisch haben." (If one wants to learn anything one must have sitting capacity).

He was a serious man in every sense of the word. He enjoyed a measure of harmless fun when it chanced to drift in his direction, but he never sought for it, and never indulged in loud unrestrained laughter. He believed that the Christian life, the life in Christ, separates the converted heart and soul from the unstable, unsatisfying, empty ambitious pursuits and the sinful indulgences of the present world. This conviction he never suspended, and according to this conviction he moulded his career, instructed his family, and directed his labors in the ministry, in the field of education, and in the relations of business. He frequently asked his classes the question: "What is the greatest of all miracles?" Some students would answer: "The Virgin Birth of Jesus," or "The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead." His rejoinder always was: "You are mistaken! The greatest miracle in all the world is the regeneration and salvation of a human soul." In his view the ministry and the Church are divinely appointed organic agencies through whose instrumentality, based upon the word of God, the world is to be brought to Christ, and through Him to obtain salvation. Thus he assigned an important place in Christian activity to the Gospel Ministry and to Homiletics. Hence at this point we begin our digest of his views, conclusions and teachings in the field of Biblical Interpretation, Church History, and the History of Christian Doctrine.

JOHN B. RUST.

Tiffin, Ohio, August, 1923.

Homiletics and the Ministry

DR HERMAN RUST taught that sacred eloquence is deeper and more intuitive than secular eloquence. Eloquence is the product of ideas, and these ideas are received from Divine Revelation. Hence familiarity with the Word of God is essential to eloquence. Lord Bacon said that man as a philosopher is the minister and interpreter of Nature. The philosopher does not originate truth. He is only an honest inquirer into, and a faithful expounder of, its mysteries. In the realm of Theology man is also an interpreter, but more positive and direct in his ministrations. The reason for this is that God originated the World and the Truth in it. Thus Revelation is the product of His Intelligence, just as the world is the product of His Power. The sum total of Creation and Revelation leads back to the Infinite.

Therefore the Theologian has no right to construe the Scriptures according to his own private opinion. In apprehending the Revelation of the Eternal Mind man is not to be creative, but exegetical. Exegesis implies and presupposes a written word, a written revelation. An unwritten revelation cannot be the object of critical examination. Those persons who object to a written revelation, to a book-revelation, are mistaken.

Biblical interpretation postulates a written revelation. A number of oratorical influences flow from the interpretation of God's Word. It imparts originality to religious thinking and discourse. The sacred orator is quickened into freedom, freshness and force by the analytical study of the Scriptures. These spiritual powers cannot be had in any other way.

Originality is not the power to create or discover something entirely new, for only God can create *de novo*. Originality is relative. Plato was merely a faithful expounder of what God had inlaid in his own mental constitution. The constitution of our minds is the same, and therefore we respond to the

great things he said. Originality in the finite mind consists in the interpretation of what is given. This in the last analysis is *Exegesis*. Plato was not the author of his own intelligence. He was only its interpreter.

Exegesis is: "The fruit of finished study." It requires not only Philology, but a knowledge of every branch of the ancient sciences, and also of the analogy of faith, which was employed by Augustine and other epochal teachers in the past. Such an exegesis fills the soul with heavenly fire and is the well-spring of originality. Hooker, Taylor, Barrow and Bates in England were filled with the spirit and substance of the written revelation, in the Seventeenth Century. Even secular literature partook of it, notably exhibited in the moral force possessed by the plays of Shakespeare.


There is still another effect which exegesis has upon the functions of the Ministry. It endows the human mind with authority. "Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?" the chief priests and the scribes said to Jesus (Luke 20:2). It was natural for them to ask this question. By what right indeed does a poor sinful creature rise up to reveal facts or to make statements concerning the mysterious beginnings of human history, the plan and purposes of the Infinite, and the alternative, as a concluding declaration, of eternal life and eternal condemnation? If Divine Revelation is set aside the minister has no more right to speak upon these mysterious subjects than any other man. He possesses this prerogative because he is endowed with the authority of a special Revelation. This authority is essential to the servant of God, to make him feel free and fearless, to animate and inspire him. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," says St. Paul. Divine Revelation is paramount to Divine Power. And power is the foundation of authority.*

He held that the minister of the Gospel ought not only to be sound in his faith concerning the great realities of Revelation, and conscious of his mission as an ambassador of Christ, but that he ought also to unfold and exercise efficient adminis-

*Homiletics. Document number one.

trative ability as a pastor. To a young man about to enter the active ministry he said: "Halte dich zu den Alten, und laufe nicht zuviel umher mit den jungen Leuten in der Gemeinde." (Associate yourself with the older people, and do not roam about too much with the young people in the congregation). When it was suggested to him on one occasion, by way of argument, that the minister is the servant of the congregation, he answered: "Not at all! That is not true! The minister, on the contrary, is the shepherd of the flock. He is the leading member in the congregation. His name crowns the list of the membership. Though his station does not permit him to lord it over God's heritage, with his wisdom, counsel and example, if he is to become a successful pastor, he must and will feed and guide his people.

The Order of Worship

O LESS important is the minister's function in the service of worship in the Lord's house. Dr. Herman Rust believed in, and always conducted, an evangelical form of worship, characterized by dignity, solemnity and edification. His conviction and practice in this respect are indicated by a translation which he made many years ago for "The Reformed Church Messenger," of the description of divine service in the early part of the Second Century, found in the writings of Justin Martyr, who wrote his account of the order of worship in the Christian Church in that Age about the year 138 or 139 A. D. Justin Martyr says:

"Those who have become convinced of the truth of our doctrine, and have determined to live in accordance with it, are first exhorted to prayer, fasting and repentance. Then we lead them to a place where there is water, and here they are baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Thus out of children of necessity and ignorance they become children of election, of divine wisdom, and of the forgiveness of sin. Baptism we also call enlightenment, because the soul (or mind) is thereby enlightened to know divine things. After having thus cleansed the believing brother by the washing of baptism, we conduct him into the assembly of the brethren, who then pray for him and for Christians of all places, that God may grant them knowledge, and grace to prove this knowledge by a pious life. After prayer we give each other the brotherly kiss. Then the minister (or deacon) brings bread and a cup of water and wine to the brethren. Thereupon he offers prayer and thanksgiving to God, to which the congregation says: Amen! Then the minister gives the bread and the cup of wine and water to every one present. This we call Eucharist, meaning the same as thanksgiving, the celebration of the Holy Supper. In this transaction only the faithful participate; for

we do not receive this as common meat and drink, but as the Logos has entered into union with Christ, so the food, we are taught, blessed by prayer, is for us a bread of life, the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh, from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished. . . . For the possession of all our gifts we praise God. On Sunday all assemble together, from the city and country, and read the writings of the Apostles (the Gospels), and likewise the Prophets (the Old Testament). After the reader has ceased to read, the Deacon (minister) gives an exhortation to live according to that which has been read. Then we all arise to pray. After this the Eucharist is celebrated (every Sunday as described above). To those who are absent they carry away a portion. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president (minister), who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead." (See *The First Apology of Justin*, chapter 47).

It will be observed, says Dr. Herman Rust, that this description is wanting in one point. It does not mention singing, whilst we know from intimations in the Scriptures, and from other writings, that the singing of Psalms and hymns was commonly practiced among the early Christians. In other respects the testimony of Justin is reliable. The worship commenced with singing, was continued with prayer, and then followed with the reading of Scripture, which passed over into preaching, the delivery of a discourse in which some passage of the Scriptures was expounded. This done, the Lord's Supper was celebrated, prayer again offered, and the benediction pronounced.


This description of the order of worship in the Christian

Church before and during the time of Justin Martyr was cited to remind the ministers and people of the Reformed Church in this later day that in it they possess an authoritative model for true evangelical worship in the House of God. Let it be understood, in passing, that Justin Martyr does not teach the doctrine of Transubstantiation in his famous utterance concerning the Eucharist. Justin plainly calls the one element *bread*, but says it is not "common bread." As late as the close of the Fifth century, Gelasius, Bishop of Rome (490 A. D.) declared: "By the sacraments we are made partakers of the divine nature, and yet the substance and nature of bread and wine do not cease to be in them." (See the original in Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xv., cap. 5. See also C. F. Roessler, *Die Kirchen-Vaeter*, vol. x., page 636. Leipzig 1786).* Dr. Herman Rust interpreted the words of Justin concerning the Holy Eucharist in accordance with the traditional teaching of the Reformed Church, as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism.† Moreover in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when he served as ministrant, he never half-whispered the words of institution to the individual communicants assembled in successive groups along the altar-railing, before the communion table, as if the service is a priestly act in an oratory; but he pronounced the words of institution loud enough, yet with reverential solemnity befitting the occasion, to be heard by everyone in the church. He did this because according to the consistent practice of the Reformed Church, and in his view, the celebration of the Eucharist is a service of spiritual communion with the Risen Christ, in which the whole congregation participates. This in like manner applies to the rite of baptism.

He also placed great emphasis upon the character and purpose of the sermon in public worship. His personal convictions and methods in this respect followed the practice and example of the Christian Church in her periods and regions of noblest activity, before, and notably after, the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, wherever true Evangelical doctrine and life gained the ascendancy.

*Document number three. †Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 68.

The Essential Characteristics of a Sermon

N ORDER that a sermon may be truly worthy of its name it must have a twofold object in view : First, the edification of those in the congregation who are converted, and, Second, the conversion of those who are still living in unconcerned sinfulness. And this object is to be reached by the earnest *exposition* and faithful *application* of the Word of God, the Law and the Gospel.

The Word of God is the proper basis of the sermon, and the exposition and application of the Word of God constitute the method of the sermon. If the sermon is really to accomplish anything it must not be merely a good speech, but rather an action in words. However in order to be such an action, in its preparation and delivery, the minister stands in need of the entire treasure of theological knowledge which the Church has gradually acquired for herself ; and in order that the right application of God's holy Word may be made, he must possess a personal experience of the power of the Law and the Gospel. He must perform the divine work not as a mere natural man, like a statesman, but as a spiritual man, as a living member of the believing congregation.

Exposition and application must not be separated, but united, penetrating each other in such a way that the exposition will naturally lead to the application, and the application flow from the exposition. A great many ministers employ the text only as an introduction, until a favorite theme has been obtained. After that they lay the Scriptures aside and feed the congregation with their own wisdom and thoughts, no matter whether they are adapted to the text or not. This is altogether wrong, because the people stand in need of God's Word, and the minister has been set apart to preach it.

In expounding the Scriptures the minister may be guided by the train of thought contained in the text and thus make his

sermon mainly explicative. Or he may be guided by the psychological train of thought which the application to the scope suggests to him, so that the sermon will be principally applicative. Or he may interweave the one with the other.

All sermons are explicative in which the text is expounded step by step, as for example St. John 1:45-51. (1) How Nathaniel is called, v. 45. (2) How Nathaniel struggles, v. 46—struggles with doubt, but honest doubt, v. 47, and with prayer, v. 48. (3) How Nathaniel is conquered, vv. 47, 49. Another example is the following: Genesis 32:9-12. Theme: Jacob's Prayer. (1) His faith. (2) His confession. (3) His thanksgiving, or gratitude. (4) His supplication. Those sermons also are explicative which do not strictly follow the thoughts of the text. For example: St. Luke 15:3-7, The Parable of the Lost Sheep. (1) Who is the lost sheep? (2) Who are the ninety and nine other sheep? (3) Who is the Shepherd that seeks the lost sheep? Again: Isaiah 40:9-12. The Rejoicing of the Church at the coming of the Lord. (1) From whom does it proceed? From God. From the preacher in the wilderness. From the daughter of Zion. (2) What is its meaning? (3) How is it manifested? With joy. With power. Without fear. Luke 7:36-50. The Anointing of Christ by Mary Magdalene. (1) The Persons. Pharisees. The great sinner. (2) The words of Jesus—spoken to both.

Applicative sermons on the other hand are determined by the scope, as for example, as indicated by the following subjects: Inclination to Pleasures; The Love of Money; Running after Riches; Indolence in, or Neglect of Prayer; Public Offenses, or whatever else may arise in the church or the community. Thereby the sermon is determined, so that the application, and not the exposition, becomes the principal thing.

The explicative, or homiletical, sermon does not necessarily require a theme and divisions, because these do not determine its character. The theme and divisions do not constitute an applicative or thematic sermon, since its inner nature does not depend upon them. But every good sermon must have internal unity, a united scope, as well as also an organic train of thought, no matter whether the succession of thoughts be

determined by the content of the textual exposition or by parts of the application of the text. This inner organization, or articulation, of the sermon must not necessarily always and everywhere come to light externally. This should be the case only where the limited appreciative ability of the congregation requires it. Just as the beauty of the human form is enhanced by the covering of flesh and blood which hides the frame-work of bones, so a sermon also appears more touching and attractive when its skeleton is concealed. But the power of apprehension as a general thing is feeble in our congregations, and for this reason it is better to announce the text and the divisions distinctly, in order to engage the reflection of the people and direct the attention immediately to the principal parts, or turning points, in the discourse, that every hearer may know with the help of every division where he now is in his devotions. A striking, attractive division of the subject easily impresses itself upon the mind, so that afterwards the hearer will be able to recall the content of the sermon. However, that they may be readily remembered, the parts must logically exclude each other. The following example will serve as an illustration. Theme: Light or Darkness, which do we want? (1) Not darkness, but light. (2) Light, and therefore freedom from darkness. A logical division of the same subject would be this: *Light*. (1) Its nature. (2) Its cause. (3) Its effects, or consequences.


The announcement of the theme and the divisions may be made in three different ways. First, every part may again be mentioned in the progress of the sermon, by saying, for example: We have now seen—or: We now come to the question—or: to the second, third, fourth part. In this manner the flow of the discourse is somewhat interrupted. In the second place, the transition to a new part or division may be so interwoven with the movement of the thought as to make it perceptible merely by the raising of the voice, in this manner for example: Yea, so the Lord has promised. We are to be saved by the hearing of God's Word. But, my dear friends, are we indeed genuine hearers? Not those who merely hear are saved, but those who also keep the Word of God. Or one may choose this approach: Yes, the promise is given us that

all things work together for our good. But, dear friends, do we love God? We need to remember that this promise is given only to those who love Him. In the third place, the announcement of the theme and the divisions may be left out entirely, as was done by many of the ancient preachers.*

* At this point a parenthetical reference is made to some work by Saurin, to his *Discours* (Amsterdam, 1720 and 1728), or to a volume of his collected sermons (The Hague, 1749), and to paragraph 172. Dr. Herman Rust frequently mentioned Saurin with great admiration and praise. Jaques Saurin (1677-1730) was the most powerful and most famous pulpit orator of French Protestantism. Immediately after the *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (1685 A. D.) his father, a learned jurist, fled with his family to Geneva, the asylum of French Protestant refugees, and there educated his three sons, especially the oldest, Jaques, who soon after the completion of his studies became one of the most wonderful Gospel preachers of the modern world. He was a man of imposing presence, entrancing and sweeping eloquence, and incredible spiritual power. In Holland he preached to vast multitudes and thousands of French refugees flocked to the great church over which he presided.

Herzog, *Real-Encyklopaedie der prot. Theologie*, vol. 13, p. 439.

The Scope of the Sermon

 FROM THE OUTLINES we have given illustrative of the fundamental character of sermons, it must be evident to us that every sermon stands in need of a well determined scope, since without this it will inevitably sink to the level of an aimless talk. For in this lies the object of the sermon, while the text is commonly used only as a means to reach this object or end. Hence the first step in the preparation of a sermon is the meditation upon the scope, and this meditation must be engaged in by the minister with all due earnestness. He must honestly confront himself with the question: What do I want to accomplish with this sermon? To what point of repentance, of faith, of love, of saving knowledge do I wish to bring my congregation? Where do my people stand in regard to the subject before me, and whither do I want to lead them?

Through an earnest meditation like this the minister will naturally be directed either from the text to a scope, or from the scope to a text. If for example he preaches successively on a large part of Scripture, or if he is particularly impressed by a single passage, he will readily also see for what object he may use it. And when his pastoral care and observation have revealed to him certain faults and needs, or evils, in the congregation, he will soon be able to find a text which will be suitable for his purpose.

Seeking a Text



AFTER THE MINISTER has fixed his mind upon a certain point or subject of saving truth, or of the Christian life which he desires to impress upon the hearts of the congregation, and to which he wishes to lead his hearers, then he must first consider this scope from every side before he begins to seek for a suitable text. The reason for this is that the suitability of the text depends upon the proper apprehension of the nature and extent of the scope. Therefore the study of the scope requires a great deal of time and cannot always be accomplished in the minister's study. In his pastoral visits, in his solitary walks, in bed before falling asleep, at home and abroad, wherever an opportunity offers itself, he must calmly consider the object of his sermon. If some particular evil which it is his duty to remove, exists in the congregation, he will have to search for all its roots and ramifications, and this must not be done according to some prescription in a book, or in accordance with the opinion of the people, but in keeping with the facts of real life. It must be correctly apprehended in its connection with the nature of the unconverted man and according to its own peculiarity. The causes of it must be known, as well as the means by which it has unfolded, together with the special and local hindrances which obstruct its removal. All these things demand careful consideration.

And furthermore, the minister must search for and study the motive of saving knowledge best adapted to the condition, the motive which is calculated to captivate the understanding and will, the conscience and heart. He is also to seek for the points of contact in the moral and Christian consciousness of the congregation, for it would be foolish and useless to build proofs and admonitions upon promises which are not at hand and find no faith in the congregation. One, for example, who does not believe in original sin, cannot from that premise be convinced of the necessity of salvation, but must first be con-


vinced of original sin through the reality of actual sins. The minister must always and everywhere seek for the remnants of the knowledge of truth which are yet to be found in the hearts of the people, and these remnants he must use as points of contact and connection for his discourse, just as was done by the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter began his sermon with the prophecy of Joel in which the Jews believed (Acts 2:16). He did not begin with the Divinity of Christ, in which they had no faith. Then he directed their minds to the signs and miracles by which he had proved himself to be a man from God, and this in like manner they were not able to deny. Had he at once opened his discourse with the presentation of the Divinity of Christ, they would in all probability have turned away from him, or caused him to be silenced.

Saint Paul in Athens did not begin his discourse with references to the Old Testament, but directed the attention of the listeners to the altar erected to the Unknown God, as a small remnant of an anticipation of Truth. Thus we also, as ministers of Christ, must begin with vantage grounds of truth and fact to which the congregation cannot refuse to yield assent. And then we must lead the people step by step further on, not according to the rules of abstract logic, but according to the principles and laws of Christian psychology. Having thus by a mature, calm and repeated meditation become fully conscious of the course that is to be pursued and of the different vantage points that have to be successively presented in order that we may reach the object of our design, it will then be comparatively easy to find a passage of Scripture in which all the requisite grounds or moments are contained. This of course requires the study and understanding of the Bible, and even where these are at hand mental toil and effort are still required for the discovery of a wholly suitable text.

That we may present this subject still more clearly, let us take as an example a minister who designs to defend Religion against the charge that, instead of filling the world with peace, it fills it with contention and strife. This accusation is his scope, which he must clearly and fully understand. He must be conscious of this entire phenomenon, and then show that

the objection, or accusation, is really well founded, for it is indeed in the nature and relation of Christianity to bring contention and strife. Then he has to prove that the peace disturbed and destroyed by Religion is not the proper peace, and that Religion does indeed bring real peace, and that this genuine peace is to be acquired by warfare. Consequently Religion, instead of deserving blame, deserves praise for bringing dissatisfaction and strife into the world. The minister has to show plainly that the natural peace among men is unsound and rotten, and that the apparent peace of our consciences is false and dangerous, and then demonstrate how and why Religion destroys this peace, and that in the last analysis its final object always is to administer and bring about the true peace with God. Matthew 10:34-38 would be a suitable text for this subject. Christ is the Prince of Peace, and yet He does not bring peace, but a sword. He takes the false peace away from men in order to establish the true.

The Selection of a Text

N SELECTING a text the minister may be guided either by the present want of his congregation, or by the custom of the Church according to which the sacred transactions are to be performed. On this point different views exist. On the one hand it is asserted and maintained that the minister has to use only the texts which are prescribed by the Church, while on the other hand the right and necessity of freedom in the choice of texts is just as firmly defended. If the minister is a servant of the Church to which he belongs, then he is obliged to follow her laws and rubrics. Thus the one side judges, while the other side holds that, since preaching and pastoral care are entrusted to the minister, the less important matter, the selection of the texts, shall also be entrusted to him. In the Lutheran Church, in which the presentation of Biblical and Church doctrines is looked upon as the principal object of worship and preaching, this view is more rigidly enforced, or at least adhered to. In the Reformed Church, as we know, conservatism is less exacting and greater freedom obtains in the official relations of the minister.

Distinctions like these, and at this point, quite naturally raise the question of the relation between the use of the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Church. Dr. Herman Rust also possessed definite views in this field of doctrine and instruction, and recognized the existence of a conflict between Science and the Church. He recorded some of his views on these important subjects. We quote from a paper or lecture he prepared upon this great and earnest problem.

The Scriptures, Science and the Church

THERE IS THUS a conflict between the Church and Science. If the Church should yield the right of interpretation to every one, then the very content of her faith becomes exposed to great danger. And if Science accepts the prescription of the Church, then all scientific investigation would be at an end. So much is certain, namely, that the Church and her rules cannot be set aside. For without the Church there could be no Christian Theology, because it is only in the Church that the whole of Theology finds its home. Without reference to the Church, Science loses its theological character. The inherent law of self-preservation requires the Church to guard her historical treasures against individual scientific caprice. The natural relation of the Church to the Scriptures proves this to be the truth. Christ and His disciples commenced with the Old Testament, which they regarded and used as an inspired record of the revelation of God. It was only gradually, after the early Christians had already had many battles with prevailing heresies, that the New Testament writings were raised to the same degree of respect and authority possessed by the writings of the Old Testament. This elevation was preceded by their Christian faith. On the ground of, and by this faith the Old Testament had been adopted, for the faith in Christ was already moving and directing the Apostles when they began to believe firmly in the Old Testament Scriptures as a testimony to Christ, and in this sense divine. Hence they soon afterward commenced to prove from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah. But this proof they could not have advanced if their own personal faith in Christ had not been already established. It would therefore be wrong to say that the Christian Church received her faith from the Old Testament Scriptures. On the contrary, the Person of Christ was

the real source and ground of faith, and the Scriptures were regarded as a work of Christ's Spirit. This Spirit the Church herself possessed. The writings of the Apostles were never quoted as *ἡ γραφή*, in the sense of an authority as in Ezra 2:62, Nehemiah 7:64, Ezechiel 13:9, or as in relation to the Law by the LXX in connection with I Chronicles 15:15, and II Chronicles 30:5, 18, though they were regarded as having been written by the Spirit, but only in and through the general Spirit that had been poured out upon all the faithful. The elevation of the writings of the Apostles followed only toward the close of the Second Century. The faith and life of the Church had been in existence a long time before the New Testament writings were considered to be divine in the same measure as the Old Testament.

Many hold that in the great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century the Scriptures produced the then prevailing faith. This is wrong, because faith in the Scriptures, though obscured, had never been entirely lost. But the true knowledge of divine and holy things in the Church had been rendered uncertain, whilst the Scriptures alone remained the same. Therefore the prevailing desire to return to fundamentals could be satisfied only by the Holy Scriptures.

All true Christian faith does not depend primarily upon the Scriptures, but upon the Person of the Savior, and on the impression He makes upon the individual. This impression of Christ is preserved and exhibited in the New Testament, and whoever feels its power begins to trust in Him and in the Scriptures, and will acknowledge in them the operation of the Holy Spirit.*

*EXPLANATORY NOTE.—If it can be shown that the New Testament writings existed at a very early period in the life of the primitive Christian communities, the apparently compulsory, but actually misleading, concession to Roman and Anglican Catholicism on the part of Evangelical Protestantism, that the New Testament writings, even the Synoptic Gospels, grew up from, and are the cream of, original or primitive Christian *tradition*, would be forever laid to rest. Evangelical Protestantism inherited this view, this dogma, from the Mediaeval and Primitive Catholic Church, and accepted it in association with the appeal of the Sixteenth Century Reform-

ers to the supreme testimony of Holy Scripture. A paralogism, a *Trugschluss*, a false dogmatic conclusion based upon a false premise, and exceedingly troublesome to Evangelical Christians, seems to be involved in this position. It is derived from an innocent, well-meant, ill defined, but not altogether harmless juggling with the word *Church* in connection with, and in relation to, the New Testament. Later representative assemblages, coupled with tradition in limited degree and in the best sense of the word, established the Canon of the New Testament, but the sacred historical, doctrinal, epistolary and prophetic writings of the New Testament were not created by any convenient consensus of the membership of the Early Church. Those writings are the testimony of original witnesses who knew Jesus and were instrumental by word of mouth, by written testimony, and by martyrdom, in helping to gather the first Christian communities. Therefore when provincial synods and ecumenical councils in later periods of Christian history fixed the Canon by sifting processes and by appeals to early tradition, they not only declared their faith in, but bound themselves and all posterity by, the authority of Holy Scripture in the fundamental teaching and conduct.

In the course of the centuries corruptions crept into the Church. The idea of the priesthood, of a real sacrifice in the Holy Communion, and the whole structure of the Papal system arose, representing a radical, sweeping and destructive departure of the Catholic Church from the historically accepted standards of her own character and mission. For this reason the reformatory movements in various countries antedating the upheaval of the Sixteenth Century, and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century itself, find justification for their essential contentions, grievances, charges, and demands.

The career of Basilides, the oldest of the primitive Christian Gnostics, reflects much new light upon this signally important subject, as the learned P. Hofstede De Groot shows in his scholarly work, a book practically unknown among students of the New Testament in America. It is entitled: *Basilides at the Close of the Apostolic Period as the First Witness for the Age and Authority of the New Testament Writings, Especially the Gospel of John, in connection with Other Witnesses up to the Middle of the Second Century*. The author of this work translated Constantine Tischendorf's: *Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst?* into the Dutch language, and then wrote his own book as a companion-piece thereto.

He places the highest valuation upon the discovery of the writings of Hippolytus, and adds that through an extended study of the early Patristic literature he reached the conviction, thus sharing the view of Tischendorf, that the evidences of the great age and early authority of the most important writings of the New Testament rest upon far firmer foundations than a multitude of learned investigators have hitherto suspected. He says that the erudite Church historian Hieronymus cites the fact that Basilides died

during the persecution of the Christians by Bar-Cochba (132-135 A. D.). At any rate he was no longer young, for he died in the year 135 at the latest, because he had lived long enough not only to have a son, but also a "genuine" disciple in, Isodorus. If he died in the year 135, he was sixty years old and had been born in the year 75 A. D. If he was seventy years old when he died, then he was born in the year 65 A. D. In the former case he lived for twenty-five (25) years, in the latter for about thirty-five (35) years, during the life time of the Apostle John, as well as that of Matthias and other Apostles. We are therefore justified in asserting that Basilides was a contemporary of those Apostles who lived the longest, as Hieronymus himself openly declared. Hence Basilides appeared upon the stage of action in the years 97-117 A. D., during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

"But we must conclude further, as I have already indicated, that in the public estimation of the Christians the books of the New Testament stood just as high in the time of Basilides as in his own view, because, in order to commend his system to them, he in their presence appealed to the books which he interpreted according to his manner, as sacred, or Holy Scriptures. I do not wish to be misunderstood when I speak of the divine authority. Thereby I do not mean an authority ascribed to them by some ecclesiastical assemblage, for at that early period there were no synods. They came later, originating in the year 170, against the Montanists. I mean that authority which arose spontaneously from public opinion, from the common impression, which the Christians possessed concerning those writings, concerning both their authors and their content. During the lifetime and shortly after the death of the Apostles and their most eminent disciples, such as Mark and Luke, exactly the same thing happened which occurred in Germany while Klopstock, Herder, Wieland, Voss, Schiller and Goethe were still living and when they died. Without the declaration of a jury the consensus of public opinion acknowledged them to be the genuine, classical, and standard authorities and leaders in the art of poetry. In like manner this was the case in the Christian Church for nearly three hundred years, with the writings of the New Testament. For the first time, in the year 361, an ecclesiastical assembly, and a provincial synod at that, declared those books to be canonical which the public mind had for a long period of time regarded as being holy."

"When this light dawned upon me by means of Basilides I could hardly place confidence in myself. Therefore I devoted myself anew to the study of the origin of the Gnostic sects, to discover whether a clearer light would come to me in connection with this wonderful phenomenon. Does Basilides stand alone? No! All that we know about the oldest of the Gnostics is fully verified concerning the oldest Gnostic system builders of Christian antiquity." (Hofstede De Groot, pp. 8, 15, 16). J. B. R.

It is wrong, therefore, to consider the Church to be the product of the Scriptures, because the Scriptures originated in the Church as the product of her active faith and life. The well known principles of the specific faith and life of the Christian Church constitute the content and spirit of the Scriptures. Both the Old and New Testament books were examined and adopted by the Church because they were considered to be the historical and didactical expression of the content of her religious life. It is for this reason that the Church has made the Holy Scriptures her true source of divine knowledge and the normal rule of faith and life. Going back to the deepest apprehension of the mystery of revelation the Church considers the Scriptures to be the work of the Holy Spirit and as the Word of God. But the central and most important point in Christianity is the faith in Christ.

From this fact has arisen the claim of the Church respecting the interpretation of Scripture. Self-preservation requires her not to admit any other interpretation than one which is analogous to, or an analogy of, her original faith and peculiar Spirit, for the relation of the Church to the Scriptures is not like that of a mere human Society, which has no religious faith, but wants first to draw this from the Scriptures. In this case the interpretation might be entirely free and new to suit both the taste and the object. As the individual looks up to Christ for life and support, so all true Christians look also to the Scriptures, because they contain the faith in Christ in words. The Church has laid hold upon and adopted the Scriptures in order to be preserved, guided and corrected thereby, and hence she cannot tolerate any interpretation which is not made according to the essential analogy of her original faith. For this reason the Church has always been the guardian of Scripture interpretation. She has laid down certain principles according to which the work is to be done, and these rules have been adopted among her dogmatical determinations, being considered to be of the same authority. The doctrinal definitions are more or less rooted in the faith and life of the Church, and must be in harmony with her traditional churchly feeling and consciousness.


The true sense of Church doctrines is to be learned from the Confessions, especially from the Confessions of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, and also from the expositions of orthodox theologians. These united authorities constitute the hermeneutical requirements laid down by the Church. According to this norm it is to be determined what must be regarded as orthodox and what as heterodox. But the Lutheran symbols say very little on the subject of interpretation, while the Reformed symbols are full and explicit upon that theme. The Helvetic Confession says that the Scriptures must be regarded as the Word of God, and consequently the interpretation must be governed by the hermeneutical rule that God Himself is the Author. Again, only that interpretation of Scripture is to be acknowledged as orthodox and genuine which is made in harmony with Scripture itself, with the law of faith and charity, for the salvation of man and to the glory of God. These requirements of the Reformed symbols are based upon such passages of Scripture as II Peter 1:20, 21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in ancient time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophetic books require an interpretation which not everyone is able to give. And the Scriptures in general do not admit of any kind of exposition. Only the Spirit that dwells in them is able to interpret them correctly. On this is based the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, while all other means are only helps to this end. The more obscure and less frequent passages must be explained by the clearer and more numerous ones. The appropriate expression for this kind of interpretation is this: "*Ex analogia Scripturae, Scriptura sancta sui ipsius interpret.*" This stands in connection with the other, that the Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures, and is in direct opposition to Roman Catholic interpretation.

When we say that Scripture is to be its own expounder we mean that one passage of the Bible must receive light from another, and one book from the other, according to general hermeneutical rules. But in using this most important method

we must be very careful to avoid the false idea of inspiration which holds that the Holy Spirit used the human authors of the Bible simply as instruments through which He spoke in a mechanical way. One must also resist the impression that He spoke partly in and through them in the verbal sense, but at the same time also for Himself in a deeper sense, and yet also in their words. This monstrous idea of a double speaking would be forever irreconcilable with any real human psychological and historical meditation on the origin of the Bible, and the Bible would thus become a perfect and an intolerable miracle and enigma. Allegorists may justify their theory by the assumption that the *Word of God* is unlimited in its content, which in the thousandfold occasions of the world's history is not always brought to light by the verbal sense, and that this deep unlimited meaning was likewise intended by the Holy Spirit to be present in the Scriptures and is therefore also intended to be interpreted and confirmed. They have overlooked the difference between explication and application. Inasmuch as the Holy Scriptures are the norm and source of religious truth, the Holy Spirit has intended its interpretation to be made in the proper sense. But the Scriptures are also a means of Grace by which the religious life is to be directed and supported, and in this respect they are unlimited in their application. To this end the Holy Spirit operates also with the Word in various ways, and by means of it. And since the operation of the Spirit by the Word corresponds with the special Providence of God, leading men to the Word, and bringing the Word home to men, causing them to feel its power and importance, therefore the brilliant light of the divine Word may thus cast the most manifold rays of truth into the soul, which humanly considered, are accidentally connected with the Word, but divinely considered are also embraced in the power and object of the Spirit, who, in this respect, operates freely with the Word, created by Himself.

But the very extensiveness and freedom of this application of the Word requires the interpretation to be the more strict, because by it the general standard and rule of truth are to be established from the Scriptures, which even the application in all its freedom dare not transcend.

The Analogy of Faith

HE ANALOGY of faith is another means for the right understanding of Scripture subjects. The analogy of faith is the internal similarity of Scripture doctrines, and very important when employed within proper limitations. To reason from analogy is correct enough when one wishes to arrive at the real meaning of a passage, but it must never overrule the grammatical and logical sense found by the use of the other means. Great satisfaction results from the successful employment of the analogy of faith. It confirms all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity beyond the possibility of doubt, and causes the mind to rejoice in the assurance of a saving faith. Hence the analogy of faith and of Christian doctrine should always more or less guide the work of interpretation, especially in phrases of doubtful meaning where the analogy of Scripture sentiment alone can lead us to the proper sense.

But it is now maintained by many that the Scriptures are to be explained according to the analogy of faith, but that since to the analogy of faith above all else the doctrine of justification through faith belongs, therefore Scripture is to be explained according to this teaching, and that this doctrine is to be sought and found everywhere. But the analogy of faith is either brought to the Scriptures *from without*, and therefore exegetically unjustifiable, or else it is the quintessence of its content drawn from Scripture itself, and then the principle is perfectly correct on the presupposition, namely, that it has really resulted from correct exegesis, and as the true quintessence. But this presupposition is untenable for the reason that such a quintessence can only be the highest result of exegesis, and is therefore always to be tested anew by the latter. It stands to reason, therefore, that exegesis must be free from dogmatic presupposition, and must in every particular case be guided by the connection. At first sight two or more passages may appear to be

perfectly analogous, but a critical examination of each passage by itself may cause all apparent analogy to vanish.

In the application of parallel ideas the same precaution must be observed. Though it is an exegetical help of great value, yet if misunderstood or wrongly applied the analogy of faith may lead to dangerous conclusions. We cite as an example Matthew 5:25, 26, as compared with Luke 12:58, 59. Both Synoptics speak of the necessity of becoming reconciled, but by examination the context of each passage shows that they are not parallel at all.

The document ends here rather abruptly. An interruption evidently occurred in its preparation, and for some unknown reason it was never completed. Dr. Herman Rust, though thoroughly familiar with many of the crucial problems of textual, historical and speculative criticism, maintained a consistently conservative attitude toward every tendency which carried in its train the disturbing and destructive elements of doubt and infidelity. The latitudinarian speculations of the great Bible critics, especially in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, men like DeWette, Ewald, Baur, Strauss, Kuenen, and others, did not appeal to him. He was afraid of such men and their writings. He regarded their scholarly individualistic freedom as a menace to the divinely revealed and sufficiently attested saving purpose of Christianity and the providential mission of the Church of Jesus Christ. He held that ministers and laymen who ally themselves with rationalistic trends ruin their own pastoral usefulness and do irreparable harm to the Church of God.

And moreover, he believed firmly in educational Christianity, namely, that the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, as recorded in the New Testament and set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, ought to be systematically, conscientiously and efficiently promulgated and perpetuated by means of catechetical instruction, through doctrinal inculcation in the Sunday School with the aid of the right kind of lesson helps, and by the agency of the highest expression of Christian home life.

Dr. Herman Rust did not fully endorse the grammatical method of Ernesti. He utilized Immer's Hermeneutics as a text-book only as far as the views of that writer agree with traditional Bible Christianity. He constantly commended Vinet's Pastoral Theology, and insisted that one can scarcely find any better work upon that important subject anywhere else.

The Gospel Ministry in his view, on New Testament grounds, is an ambassadorship of Christ. The Minister is neither a priest in the Roman Catholic sense, nor a pastor in the strict Lutheran sense, but a *cure* of souls, a "Seelsorger," one who is to win, to teach, to guide and to feed human souls under his care and within the circle of his influence, one who is responsible to God for the spiritual welfare of his people in obedience to the supreme example of Jesus: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (St. John 10:27-30).

NOTE.—In further elucidation of the difficult problem of the origin of the New Testament Canon, already alluded to on pages 27-29, and of the Synoptic Gospels particularly, the conclusions of Pastor George Stolsch (Eyewitnesses of the Life of Jesus, Berlin, 1895), shed a great deal of satisfying light upon the subject. In the last analysis, he says, it is the *testimonium Spiritus sancti*, the witness of the Holy Spirit, which decides between faith and unfaith. And yet we must not forget that when Jesus promised His disciples the gift of the Holy Ghost, He added the declaration: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (St. John 15:27).

The Gospel of Mark was written through the agency of Peter, who entered the circle of the chosen twelve after the childhood period of Jesus, which lay beyond the border line of his personal experience. For this reason St. Mark begins his Gospel with the ministry of John the Baptist. St. Peter kept silent concerning the events that preceded the appearance of the great forerunner of Christ. This explains the absence of the genealogy of Jesus from the Gospel of St. Mark.

The Apostle James, who remained in Jerusalem and knew the family history of Jesus, gave original source material to St. Matthew, the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. If it is true that the Gospel of Mark antedates the Gospel of Matthew, on traditional grounds, and because so

much of the text of Mark reappears almost word for word in Matthew's Gospel, the significant fact impresses one profoundly to find that the "Peter Rock passage" (Matthew 16:17, 18, 19) does not occur in the Gospel of Mark. If Peter had ever, in his own person, received the "Power of the Keys," he certainly would have made his commission known to Mark!


As the Gospel of Mark is the Petrine Gospel, so the Gospel of St. Luke is the Pauline Gospel. The universal tradition of the Ancient Church testifies that St. Paul authorized and moved St. Luke to write the Gospel which bears his name. A careful scrutiny of important passages in Luke's Gospel shows conclusively that their content could have come from no other person than St. Paul, who, though "born out of due time," must have seen and known Jesus in Jerusalem.

St. John wrote the Gospel of John. He wrote it near the close of his life, to place upon record events and experiences in his association with Jesus, which are not presented in the setting, or are not mentioned at all, in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke. The Apostles James, Peter and Paul, standing unheralded in the background, sought through Matthew, Mark and Luke to give an authentic and authoritative account of the Life of Jesus, as free as possible from the coloring and gloss of their own individuality. The Gospel of St. John, filled with fervor and adoration, intones the chord of personal testimony: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Including the writers of the Apostolic Epistles, these are the witnesses whom Jesus meant when He announced to His immediate disciples that they also would bear testimony concerning Him and His mission.

J. B. R.

Hermeneutics

N A GENERAL sense we understand by Hermeneutics the theory of interpretation, or the systematic confirmation of the general laws and principles according to which the written sense of a document is discovered in word or sentence. Interpretation is the art or skill to discover the meaning of an author and explain it. If the Bible were regarded simply as a written document of antiquity like other books, or as a part only of the general religious literature, considered alike or similar, a Biblical Hermeneutic as a special scientific branch of study would hardly be necessary, as in this case Hermeneutics could be applied to it. But to the Christian the Bible is a record of Divine Revelation, the only proper source of eternal and absolutely reliable *Truth*, for which reason it is also the ultimate rule of faith and life, the source of real comfort and spiritual enjoyment for time and eternity. That this character of the Bible and its elevated position require an essential modification of the laws of general Hermeneutics is at once apparent. But on account of its high position and general character it has been agreed by many that the Bible must be capable of interpretation without any scientific rules, not only by the learned, but also by the unlearned, being alike intended for all. At first sight this opinion seems plausible, for it has never been successfully denied that every Christian is able to understand the Bible as far as this is necessary for his own soul's salvation.

It is upon this presumption that Protestantism has given, and is giving, the Bible into the hands of all its members. This Christian liberality in the distribution of God's Word has, however, been carried to an extreme by fanatics, such as the Quakers and others, who have come to the false conclusion, and maintain it obstinately, that a learned exposition of Scripture is altogether superfluous. This fanatical extreme has called forth much opposition, not only from Catholic writers, but also from many learned Protestant theologians of different denominations, some of whom have reached the conclusion that

the Bible should only be placed into the hands of persons who are able to interpret it aright, and that its free distribution among the people should always be accompanied with proper instruction on the part of able orthodox men. In this way they believe it to be possible to prevent the abuse of the Bible and to save the Church from sectarian divisions. But this limitation of the use of the Bible, if consistently carried out, would finally bring us to the position of Popery, which confined the use of the Bible altogether to its own able and faithful adherents. As Christ Himself, so also is His Holy Word for all the people, and the Church has no right to deny anyone the privilege of its use. Had the Church always used the Scriptures properly they would not have been abused so much, nor would the free use of the Bible have resulted in so many heresies and sects.

Those who hold that a learned interpretation of the Bible is unnecessary forget or ignore the fact that without scientific exposition such as is employed in translation, they themselves would never have come into possession of the Bible, for the learned understanding and interpretation of its meaning gave the Bible to them as well as to all of us.

The Bible is a record of ancient times, prepared in a language now dead, under national circumstances and local relations vastly different from our own. It was written by authors for readers whose moral and spiritual condition and views could hardly in any sense be compared with our surroundings and conceptions. It follows, therefore, that only through a learned interpretation can the real sense of those writings be properly expounded. If the works of modern authors like Goethe and Shakespeare, or even Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, require commentaries for their correct apprehension, and if plain expository sermons are often not understood by the common people, how would it be possible to obtain the real meaning of Bible records without the assistance of scientific rules? But because the Bible is divinely inspired, and therefore a holy book, a merely scientific interpretation cannot elucidate its proper meaning. This is plainly shown by the perverted interpretations of Rationalistic theologians such as

Germany produced during the last (the Nineteenth) Century. They possessed indeed the requisite historical, grammatical and philological ability in the highest degree, but their mode of thinking was void of the necessary element of religion. They had no sympathy with the living Church of God, in which and for which the Word of God has been given, and hence their interpretation must necessarily be false.

The works of Rationalism, of that system which makes our rational power the ultimate test of truth, teach us that we cannot understand the Scriptures *per se*, but must also give heed to the Church, for in it the life and spirit of the holy men of God, the authors of the Bible, are perpetuated. The Scriptures can be the rule and norm of faith only when understood and properly esteemed in the sense of the Church, for it is only in this way that they are considered of binding authority. But a vigorous use of the Bible always has the tendency to liberate the mind from a slavish Scholasticism, as it did in the Reformation period, and also in the last century, though the interpreters of the latter age were negative in their work, principally endeavoring to tear down all that the Church had formerly established. Nevertheless this negative, rationalistic tendency called forth an energetic, sound and positive tendency, which has since then accomplished wonders in the expounding of Holy Writ.

The difficulties connected with the interpretation of the Bible are, first, the antiquity and oriental character of the writings that compose it, as has been hinted above. The sacred writers are very remote from us, in a civil, moral and religious sense. To appreciate their writings we must be able to understand them in their distant position and surroundings. We must therefore, transfer ourselves in thought back to the time, and place ourselves into the circumstances, in which those men lived and moved. To pass judgment upon their writings from our own standpoint must necessarily lead to misunderstandings. We must be able in imagination to enter their position in order that we may see and feel as they saw and felt. They were Orientals, and hence we must acquire a knowledge of their language, else we can never understand the meaning of their words.

Again, in the second place, we must also be familiar with history, since in one sense the Bible is an historical production, and all the facts recorded in it are surrounded by great historical developments. It is for this reason that Hermeneutics is considered to be a branch of Historical Theology, because its province is to set forth the historical beginning and foundation of Biblical religion and its further development in the history of the world.

There is a conception of Inspiration according to which the Scriptures are altogether divine, not in the least conditioned by human agency. If this view were correct the interpretation of the Bible would be an easy task indeed. But it naturally lies in the conception of Inspiration that the latter must partake of, must be colored by, the mind through which it passes, for the mind of a Prophet moves with as much freedom as does the mind of any profane writer. We have no reason, therefore, to think that an uninspired book can be understood unless the reader transports himself into its action and atmosphere and apprehends the author's mode of reasoning. A great difference exists between Greek and Jewish writers even among the Apostles.

But this external natural difficulty is far less pronounced than the internal moral difficulty, which consists in this, that all men by nature are devoid of sympathy with divine truth and unable, therefore, to realize and expound its meaning. Just as Homer's Iliad, or any other great poetical work, can be fully appreciated only by a poetical mind, so also great religious works, written by spiritually minded men, can be apprehended only by means of competent spiritual qualification, especially in relation to the Bible. Hence we have a perfect right to maintain that men like Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and the Rationalists of Germany, are morally disqualified to understand and interpret the Scriptures. The spiritual sense of the Bible can be apprehended only by earnest spiritual minds. There must be a living sympathy with the Scriptures, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the Church of God, within whose pale, for whose edification and perpetuity the Scriptures were written. Without regard for the Church and her under-

standing of the Bible our own interpretation must needs be singular and one-sided, which is abundantly proved by the false sectarian expositions of so many fanatics in our day. We must admit, in a proper measure, the authority of the Church, in which the spirit of the Bible dwells, and our minds must be in sympathy with her life and interests in order that the real meaning of Divine Truth may be apprehended.

Schleiermacher regards Hermeneutics as the skill of understanding the sense of a written document, without including also the exposition of that that has been understood. This is, however, not a full view of the subject. The Bible has evidently been given to mankind for the purpose of being understood by everyone, but since all are not scientifically qualified to reach this understanding, the Art of Interpretation must also include the work of setting forth and explaining the discovered meaning of the contents. Hence Hermeneutics must also lay down and establish the general principles of this exposition. Therefore it is necessary for an interpreter to possess a keen power of discernment to apprehend the content of Holy Scripture, and he must also have the skill to explain it to others. It is not easy to know even whether we understand a passage of the Bible or not, for many imagine they do, while in reality they are grossly mistaken. Some confine themselves to an interpretation of the subject matter without regard to the form in which it appears, while others are satisfied with an interpretation of the word or language without proper respect for the subject matter. Both of them must necessarily fall short of the real meaning, because the content is the cause of the form. Thought and Word constitute a living union like soul and body, so that the one cannot be understood without the other. It is precisely this interpretation of content and word which should engage the skill of the interpreter, in order that the complete sense of the author may be obtained. "What is given must be interpreted as it has been given," in connection with, and out of, the living active causes which called it forth, for every writer has been determined by internal and external reasons to perform his duty in the particular manner laid down. Hence we can only fully understand him in connection with those determining causes and circumstances.

Interpretation consists in the first place in the discovery or mediation of the sense of any word singly considered. But the single word or passage is always only a member of a whole textual body, a part of a particular writing or book, and of all the books belonging together, as in the Bible. To understand a single passage, therefore, it must be considered as a part of the whole in which it lives, and it must be explained by the united Spirit and form of the Bible. Archaeology, Biblical Theology, Introduction to the Scriptures, and even Dogmatics may confine themselves to single passages to conform with their standpoint. But Hermeneutics must comprehend the whole field to which these special branches are devoted, and proceed from the general to the particular, while Exegesis and other sciences proceed from the particular to the general.

It is the object of interpretation rightly to understand the sense expressed in the words, and fully to apprehend the historical reality. For this reason philological equipment and ability are indispensable. Only a truly philological interpretation can properly explain the formal, or bodily, side of Scripture according to the general laws of Grammar and Rhetoric. A word is primarily a thought which externalizes itself in sound, and hence there is a great difference between word and sound, though the word may be called a peculiar or significant sound. But since a word is the externalization of a thought, every word must have a meaning, for a word without meaning would in reality not be a word at all. The literal meaning of a word is the immediate sense which it suggests, but which is not always the primary sense, for many words have lost their original sense and now express a quite different meaning, as, for instance, the word *δοῦλος*, or slave.

A word has two senses, the external and the internal, or the sound and the meaning. But they are intimately connected together, and this connection between sound and sense is not arbitrary or mechanical. It is internal and natural. Ernesti and other writers on the subject have represented the relation between sound and sense to be accidental, or the result of a mere agreement among men. But this notion is false, for if a word could be considered to be accidental in the connection

that exists between its sound and its sense, then the whole language would fall into the same category. The difference in language, in some instances very great and in others quite small, is by no means accidental, but grown out from the nature of a country and the character of a people. Nevertheless all languages, just as do all peoples, spring from the same stock. There are families of languages, as, for example, the Semitic, the Germanic, the Slavonic, and so on, which proves the organic nature of language. At the same time every family of languages and every single language has its own laws and is governed by them. The human mind, the living and productive source of thought, may be considered to be the soul of language, and language may be regarded as being the most beautiful embodiment of the mind. But since the mind is a living organ, its production and manifestations must be organic. Consequently every word stands organically related to the form in which it appears. For this reason we must understand the life of a nation in order to understand their language. A foreigner in this country will never become proficient in the use of the English language unless he imbibes the spirit and life of the American people and takes an active part in their interests. And this is true of every other living language, whereas on the other hand it is far more difficult to understand a dead language. Though the words of two different languages may often seem to be similar, or even alike, yet the sense is not always the same. This is one cause of the impossibility of making an absolutely literal translation of a document from one language into another.

A degree of connection exists between the sense of words and their letters. Some letters will naturally enter into certain kinds of words, as in Hebrew, where all the words of the language may be traced to three kinds of roots. Yet it would be absurd to suppose that the Hebrew language could be interpreted by the mere form of its letters. It is the *usus loquendi* alone that can give us the proper meaning. As the people themselves understood their language, so we must understand it, for after the relation of words and their sense has once become established by usage, it is reliably fixed and we cannot change it, even if we should not like the sense of some word or

words. The connection cannot be broken by choice, nor has anyone a right to give an arbitrary meaning to a word, no matter how important the considerations may be which make a change desirable. It is also to be remembered that a word can have only one sense in the same sentence, for if it could have two or more meanings there would be no established meaning at all and we would run into endless confusion. On the other hand it is admitted that words sometimes have different meanings in different sentences and connections. In this case it becomes necessary to examine the context and design in order to discover the real meaning of the words and the ultimate purpose of the sacred writers toward which all their inspired productions look, and for which they are given to the world: faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is the central object of Divine Revelation and the cardinal point in which all the books of Holy Scripture agree. By keeping this fact in view the context will always enable us to find the real meaning of singular expressions or words.

There has been at all times a tendency to attribute different meanings to words. Origen claimed a threefold sense in Scripture: First, a literal (historical) sense; Second, a spiritual and mystical sense (for the Church); Third, a moral sense (respecting the soul of every Christian). This method of interpretation was imitated and followed during the Middle Ages, up to the Twelfth Century.

Others claimed to find a fourfold meaning in Scripture: First, the historical; Second, the allegorical; Third, a tropical or figurative sense, and Fourth, an anagogical, mystical or spirit-elevating sense. Still others maintained the practice, in accordance with their opinion, of finding a seven and eightfold meaning in Scripture, as did for example Angilram, a monk.* To

* This allusion to Angilram in connection with the science of Hermeneutics is somewhat vague, apparently so, because Angilram, abbot of the monastery of Senones and Bishop of Metz (768-791), if this is the man meant by the author, owes his place in history in the main to the unaccountable entanglement of his name with the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals.

—Editor.

this method belonged: First, the historical; Second, the allegorical; Third, a sense between the two (?); Fourth, a tropical sense (relative to the Trinity); Fifth, a parabolical sense; Sixth, a sense relating to the double appearance of Christ, and Seventh, a moral sense. The threefold sense was itself often interpreted mystically, as for instance by St. Bernard in his Ninety-second sermon, which is divided in the following manner: The Bridegroom Leads the Bride, First, Into the garden (Historical sense); Second, Into the Spice fruit and wine cellar (the moral sense); Third, Into the cubiculum, the sleeping room (mystical sense).

This dangerous treatment of the Sacred Scriptures received a check only in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, when Popes and Church Councils forbade its further practice. The extravagance and abuse resulting from the ancient habit of ascribing different meanings to words, in later times called forth another tendency which excludes all senses save one, namely, the grammatical sense. This procedure would be correct if the Bible were merely a human production, for according to the laws of Hermeneutics in general, we can only find in a word the meaning the author has associated with it. In a particular word he can have expressed only one particular thought, for it is certain that, in speaking, a man always says only one thing, which is at the time the subject of his thoughts. And inasmuch as the Bible speaks to human beings in human language, it cannot be exempted from this general rule according to which a passage can have only one original particular sense that flows directly from the words, called: *sensus literalis*, also *verbalis*, *etymologicus*. But this does not say that the words must always be taken in their proper sense. It may often be necessary to modify their meaning, when the connection shows that the author has something different in mind, sometimes the opposite of what at first sight appears to be expressed by the words. The following passage may be cited as an example: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man (Adam) is become as one of us." (Genesis 3:22). Here the real import of this ironical expression is the reverse of the meaning it seems to convey.

The very tendency, which has been in existence for so long a time, to give different meanings to words, shows that the probability of different senses exists. But while it must be conceded that the same word may have a different meaning in different passages, and while a passage may have a twofold meaning, yet the single word can have only one sense. The literal, historical, moral, doctrinal and other kinds of meanings, which some take separately, are so united that in fact they constitute only one sense, and this natural union of senses must not be disturbed lest we fall into endless confusion. The union of the primary and secondary meanings is not merely external and mechanical, but organic and real. The reason is that every author stands in a general system of thought, which naturally enters more or less into his individual writings, even contrary to his intention, so that he actually becomes the medium of expression both for the particular subject and the general system of thought by which he is surrounded.

The Book of Proverbs seems to have a double meaning throughout. It refers first to the political, and then also to the moral condition of the world. And not only this book, but the Old Testament as a whole, has a twofold sense, having reference primarily to the People of Israel, and in the second place to the New Testament Dispensation. As an example we may take the words: "Out of Egypt have I called my son," (Matthew 2:15), the primary sense of which is evidently applied to the Jewish nation, but another, deeper sense, respecting Christ, is also implied.

Persons of a spiritualistic tendency, who regard the Holy Spirit not only as the principal, but almost as the sole author of the Scriptures, and who for this reason attribute infinite riches to the contents of the Bible, have, consequently, not been satisfied with the direct and indirect senses referred to above. Hence they consider it to be their right and duty to find one or more deeper meanings in the Sacred Scriptures, of which the human authors of the writings were not always conscious, and which were incorporated in the words by the Holy Spirit. This manner of interpreting the Bible is commonly called the Alle-

gorical. This method proceeds upon the supposition that something different from what is said, is meant, and that hence the words are to be taken as a figurative signification of thoughts, or that they must be understood to contain one sense, and perhaps several other meanings, besides the verbal signification. Thus Schwedenborg gave to some words in a sentence a literal, and to others an allegorical meaning, a proceeding which must be considered to be groundless and false.


The motive which prompted the allegorical interpretation was not always bad, for it was in many instances based upon a profound veneration for the Bible as the work of God's Holy Spirit, and manifested an earnest desire to unfold the deep mines of its unsearchable riches. But in most cases the allegorical interpretation is resorted to to establish and support some particular standpoint, system, or religious theory. In view of this abuse of Holy Scripture, Protestant theologians early laid down the rule that every passage can have only one original and particular sense, namely, the verbal sense, which of course excludes all allegorical interpretation. At the same time they did not thereby deny that the verbal sense of Bible passages may refer to something higher and broader. But they declined to regard this extended meaning as another particular meaning besides the original sense of the word intended by the Holy Spirit, and to be interpreted as such, but only as an application of the verbal sense. This rule was based upon the presumption that a writer at the time of composition can have only one definite subject in his thoughts, and that this is the only thing he can express in his words. But the friends of the Allegory have opposed this claim by saying that every intimation is a second meaning, and whoever does not apprehend this and include it in his interpretation cannot fully expound the connection and import of the contents. This is perfectly correct, because it is natural for subordinate conceptions to become interwoven with the principal train of thought. This, however, does not prove the existence of a plurality of senses claimed by the Allegorists, for the secondary conception was not intended to serve as a particular meaning, but came in rather by acci-

dent, and therefore cannot be regarded as being a second meaning. That the particular idea expressed in the word or sentence may at the same time include a general idea as its ultimate end has been conceded above. But this general idea expressed in, and with, the individual or particular subject, is not necessarily a product of conscious deliberation, for we know that in cases of the most sublime human production the speaking and writing are instinctive and inspirational rather than the result of conscious calculation, so much so, indeed, that authors themselves are often unable to see the distant bearing of the great thoughts set forth in their own works. Though we must never consider the authors of the Bible as mere machines of the governing Holy Spirit, nevertheless it is evident that their individual consciousness was transcended by far by the Divine Truth revealed by them. Many apprehended only one side of the truth, while their words in which this truth is particularly expressed, point us toward and unveil to us an unlimited depth and distance, and hence admit of more than one application. However this view of the Biblical authors does not require an allegorical interpretation, but refers especially to what is called the typical explanation of the Bible.

An allegory is an imaginary representation of facts and therefore stands closely related to the typical interpretation. For this reason we must exercise great caution lest we force meanings into the Scriptures which they will not bear. The great error and confusion which result from allegorizing commence properly when the typical interpretation does not proceed from the connection present in Scripture itself, nor from its clearly expressed fundamental idea. It is wrong, therefore, to set forth from any system of thought not founded upon Holy Scripture, or which goes beyond the Scriptures. And furthermore the deeper lying references to general subjects must only be sought where Scripture itself requires us to seek them. For while the position of certain Old Testament institutions, persons and passages is such that their fulfillment can be found only in the New Testament, the position and significance of others evidently confine them to the time and circumstances in

which they originated. It lies in the nature of types, moreover, that the further-reaching references can have only a general representative character, can apply only to certain general fundamentals, which are held together by the organic bond of a common idea and certified or proved thereby. The more atomistic, or isolated, the references show themselves to be, the more certainly are they false. The real fallacy of Allegory consists in this, that it seeks the deeper references not in the things, but in the words, and that consequently it considers these references or applications to be so many different senses imbedded in the words. But language is not typical. Only things are typical, and hence it is a lamentable mistake when any person tries to draw from the language what the things alone contain. The Allegorical interpretation in general is arbitrary, though in some instances very ingenious, in most cases it is an insipid playing with words. However the Allegorical interpretation is not only condemned by its arbitrary proceeding, but also by the fatal consequences which result from it respecting the significance of the Bible as a record of Revelation. Subordinating, as it does, the grammatico-historical sense to the higher, more general meaning, all certainty of the true understanding of the Bible vanishes, and thus the real object of Revelation is frustrated.

The Principles of Interpretation

HE ELEVATION of the writings of the Apostles into proper and prevalent regard and their general use in public worship occurred only toward the close of the Second Century, after the animated controversies with various heretics, especially the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the Elcesaites, and other early Gnostic sects. Hence it is evident that the faith and life of the Church had been in active existence a long time before all the New Testament writings were considered as of specially divine origin and authority in the same measure as was the Old Testament Canon.

It has been held and asserted by many that at the time of the great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century the then prevailing faith was the product of the Holy Scriptures. This view, plausible as it appears, is however not correct, because faith in the Scriptures, though greatly obscured before the Reformation, had never been entirely lost. But the real knowledge and internal consciousness of divine and holy things in the Church had been rendered indistinct and uncertain by unscriptural doctrines and irrational practices, so that the Reformers, awakened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, seeing the mighty changes that had taken place in every department of activity, together with the consequent obscurity and uncertainty, searched the Holy Scriptures and found that they alone had remained unchanged. For this reason the prevailing desire to return to fundamentals could be satisfied by nothing else than the Scriptures, and this gave them the position of pre-eminence which they possess in Protestant households from that day to the present time.

All true Christian faith does not depend primarily upon the Scriptures, but upon the Person of the Saviour and on the impression which He makes upon the individual. So it was with the Apostles. The impressions of the Saviour upon their

minds and hearts were first manifested and proclaimed by them in sermon and conversation, and afterwards preserved and exhibited in the New Testament. For this reason whoever feels the power of these impressions, as it was felt by the Apostles, will at once begin to trust confidently in the Scriptures, and will plainly see and acknowledge in them, the operation of the Holy Spirit.

In view of these historical facts it must be evident to every one that it is wrong to regard the Church as the product of the Scriptures simply because they had their origin in the Church, and were to a great extent the product of her living faith and active life. The well-known principles of the specific faith and life of the Christian Church constitute the content and spirit of the Scriptures. Both the Old and New Testament writings were adopted by the Church because she considered them to be the historical and didactic expression of the principles and content of her religious faith and life. It is for this reason that they have been, and ever will be, the constant and only valid source of divine knowledge and normal rule. Going back to the deepest apprehension, the Church considers the Scriptures to be the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. But though this high regard for the Scriptures is altogether right and proper, yet the faith in Christ as the center and object of both Covenants, must ever be held to be the primary and most important fact in Christianity. It was the Personal, Living Christ who by His Word and Spirit changed Peter and Paul and John, and all His other disciples, into new creatures. He drew them to Himself by the Word and Spirit which proceeded from Him.

From this fact, then, arises the claim of the Church concerning the interpretation of the Scriptures. The inherent law of self-preservation requires her to guard against and reject any other interpretation than one that is in harmony with her original faith and peculiar Spirit. For it must be remembered that the relation of the Church to the Scriptures is not like that of a mere human society which has nothing to do with religious faith. Such a society may go to the Scriptures for the purpose of discovering or inventing some kind of a faith for its own

purpose. In this case the interpretation may be entirely free and altogether novel to suit the taste of the association and the object they wish to reach. But the Church, being already in possession of her own peculiar faith, can have no such intention in the interpretation of Scripture, and neither can the Church tolerate any interpretation that comes into direct conflict with her saving faith. As the individual Christian looks up to Christ for life and support, because without Him he can do nothing, so all true Christians find it necessary to look into, and to search the Holy Scriptures, because they contain and mirror forth, in the purest manner, the faith in Christ, and the faithfulness of Christ to his followers. The Church has adopted and canonized these Scriptures for no other purpose than to be preserved, guided and protected thereby. And it is therefore quite natural that she cannot tolerate any interpretation of this sacred canon which runs counter to the essential analogy of her original faith.

For this reason the Church has always claimed to be the only proper guardian of Scripture interpretation. She has laid down certain principles according to which the work is to be done, and these principles have been adopted among her dogmatical determinations, being considered of like importance and authority. The doctrinal definitions are rooted, more or less, in the faith and life of the Church, and must therefore be in harmony with her traditional churchly feeling. And this churchly feeling or consciousness has again to be guarded and directed by the doctrinal statement.

In order to obtain the true import of church doctrines we must apply ourselves to the different confessions, especially to those of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, and also to reliable orthodox expositions of these Confessions. As these Confessions are essentially in perfect harmony with all the most important Confessions of Primitive Christianity, and since faithful theologians have expounded them in the spirit of the Gospel, we therefore hold that these united authorities constitute the hermeneutical requirements laid down by the Church. By the light of these authorities we are to determine what is to be regarded as orthodoxy, and what as heterodoxy.

The Lutheran symbols, however, say very little on the subject of interpretation; but the Reformed confessions give us full and explicit information. The Helvetic Confession declares that the Scriptures must be regarded as the Word of God. This, therefore, is the hermeneutical presupposition, that God Himself is the prime Author of the Bible, and we interpret it in accordance with this presupposition. Again it says: "Only that interpretation of Scripture is to be acknowledged as orthodox and reliable which is made in harmony with Scripture itself, in keeping with the rule of faith and love (charity), to the glory of God and for the salvation of man." These hermeneutical requirements of the Reformed symbols are based upon such passages as II Peter 1:20, 21: "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

It may be proper to remark here that the Prophetic books require most careful interpretation, such as not everyone is able to give. And the Scriptures in general do not admit of any and every kind of exposition. They are full of a deep spiritual element, and the spirit that dwells in them must interpret itself. This fact has led to the conclusion that, while the knowledge of language, connection, author, history, parallel passages, and so on, is necessary, as a source of help, it after all remains true that Scripture must interpret itself. It is not merely according to the language, but according to the spirit of the language that the Scriptures have to be expounded. Every single passage is to be considered in its connection. The succession of sentences and periods, as well as the different parts of the context, must be properly accounted for. The obscure and less frequent passages have to be explained by the clearer and more numerous ones. For this kind of interpretation the best expression is: "*Ex analogia Scripturae, Scriptura sancta sui ipsius interpres.*" This stands in close connection with the other presupposition, namely, that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Scriptures. This method of interpretation stands in direct opposition to that of the Catholics, who hold that

their Church alone can give the proper interpretation of Holy Scripture, and not the Scriptures themselves.

When we say that Scripture is to be its own interpreter, we mean that one passage of the Bible must receive light from another, and one book from another, according to general hermeneutical rules. There is something very peculiar in this, because the Scriptures are looked upon as the Word of God. The rule of the Church, therefore, can mean nothing more than this, namely, that wherever we find an idea or sentiment clearly set forth, this is to be taken as normal evidence for other passages in which the same subject is treated. If for example the subject of the forgiveness of sin by faith in Christ is presented in the New Testament, we must be able to find it also in the Old Testament. Otherwise our supposition of the complete union of Scripture would be lost. The essential result must necessarily harmonize because the Scriptures are the Word of God, and therefore cannot contradict themselves.

Besides the analogy of Scripture we have also to observe the analogy of faith, and carry out the process of interpretation accordingly. This general Christian faith has been drawn from the clear and evident teaching of Scripture, since it stands forth strikingly in all its prominent parts, and thus forces itself upon every candid mind. It is called the ruling faith because we find it as a reigning principle in the Primitive Church, and all through her history. Originally it constituted the substance of the simple confession made by the subjects of baptism. It was a clear and sharp outline of all sure and necessary doctrines of faith, the sum and substance of all the most evident passages of Scripture, a proper and safe expression of faith in a number of definite articles. This was subsequently called the Apostles' Creed, and retains this name at the present day. But there were also other rules of faith, drawn directly from the Holy Scriptures, according to which the interpretation was made. The great church Father Saint Augustine wanted to have all Scripture interpreted in accordance with the *regula fidei et charitatis* (the rule of faith and love), or: to the honor of God and for the salvation of man. This is certainly a very good rule to

follow, and if faithfully applied must produce the most desirable results.

In the Augsburg Confession a similar rule is laid down, according to which the interpretation shall be made in harmony with the norm which is firmly founded on the Scriptures, namely, such a rule as is obtained from a complex of plain Biblical passages. This criterion, however, is insufficient because it leads too far in the direction of individual liberty, and must in the end produce a rationalistic interpretation, such as has troubled the Church throughout her history to a fearful extent. All reliability and safety must vanish where the interpreter is at liberty to deduce his own criterion from a complex of Scripture passages merely, because this rule will always be in harmony with his own spirit and preconceived notions, or it will be formed according to the object which he desires to reach. Not only Scripture, but also symbolical authority, must guide the interpreter in his work. In his *Institutes*, I, 7, 8, Calvin gives excellent instruction concerning symbolical authority. Speaking of the evidence of Scripture, he says: "But how shall we be persuaded to accept the divine original? This is just as if one would ask, how shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? The Scriptures exhibit as clear an evidence of their truth as do white and black things of their color."

The real meaning of the doctrine of the Church respecting interpretation may be defined in this way: In expounding Scripture we must act upon the presumption that the contents are intended for, and directed to, the introduction of man into communion with God, and thus to Eternal Life, by means of a living and life producing knowledge, and that it is the Spirit of God who to this end speaks and operates in, and through, the Scriptures. For it is the very nature and object of the Holy Spirit to restore in man the lost image of God and communion with Him, and thus to cause man to live in eternal bliss. And the Saviour says: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (St. John 17:3).

This presupposition, that the contents of Scripture have

this nature and tendency, is purely spiritual, the product of a living, experimental faith. An earnest desire to find the contents of Scripture to be of such a nature and tendency, must animate the interpreter, otherwise he cannot possibly present the real truth to others. It is a well known fact that under the influence of this desire many dark and difficult passages have been properly apprehended by uncultivated, but truly pious people, and much better than by some learned Doctors of Divinity. Simple minded farmers and warm hearted mechanics are often better able to tell us what the Lord means, than are some professors of Theology.

It is not an arbitrary injunction, but a perfectly natural right, which causes the Church to lay down the above presupposition, and to require its observance in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, because the Bible is actually the book of her Spirit. The same Spirit that enlightened and animated her from the beginning, was the efficient cause also of the production and settlement of her sacred books. Hence there can be no essential difference between the Scriptures and the faith and life of the Church, though there may at times occur vast and long divisions in their relations, resulting from the misapprehension of their divinely ordered mutual interrelation and dependence. All true members of the Church are conscious of the fact that there is, and must be, union and harmony between the Spirit of Holy Scripture and the Spirit which ever produces and animates the peculiar life of the Church. It is this consciousness which the orthodox Protestant Churches have set forth in, and by, their rule of interpretation. The exposition is to be made through the operation of the Christian Spirit and in its interest and direction, so that everything in the Scriptures in agreement with this Spirit, or which stands in any relation to it, may be observed, and whatever nourishes and enlightens the faith, may be apprehended and brought out. In this Spirit the unity of the fundamental ideas in the Old and New Testament is found and preserved, because it furnishes not only the subjective condition for the proper freedom toward, but also the proper veneration for, the Bible in its exegetical and critical treatment. Hence an expositor, working

in and for the Church, must perform his duty in strict harmony with this Christian Spirit. The Bible is to be its own expounder, and the Spirit that dwells in it and in the Church, expounds itself. In every literary production the subjective spirit seeks the objective spirit, but cannot find it if it is not of the same nature and tendency. The Christian Spirit is not only plainly visible in the Holy Scriptures, but is also constantly to be known in the movements and facts of the Christian life. According to all the most highly honored Confessors, the Holy Scriptures, from the very beginning, have exercised an essential influence upon the establishment and preservation of that peculiar spiritual life which they regarded as the highest and most precious treasure. But if the Scriptures have produced such spiritual effects as those which are presented to us in the peculiar life of the Church, then this life must ever be the very point of departure from which we may again penetrate into the Scriptures. Only he who is consciously moved by this peculiar spiritual life will be able to discover and understand the source from which it emanates.

If the interpreter dwells in this spiritual life he will naturally and necessarily reach the conclusion that the highest and most central point of Holy Scripture, which constitutes its real, fundamental bond of unity, is the Incarnation, the Person, and the Redemptive Work of Christ. All Scripture stands in a certain relation to Him. The entire Old Testament points forward to the fullness of time, and the New Testament begins with it. From this fact it follows necessarily that whoever wishes to understand the Scriptures fully and correctly must first take his position in this highest, most central point, in Christ. No irreligious person can ever rightly penetrate the Holy Scriptures. Without the opening of the spiritual eye in man, he can understand the Scriptures as little as he can understand Christ Himself. Even Science is compelled to confess that no one has the ability to interpret a written document without possessing its spirit. The largest and most important part of the Bible is full of a mystical religious spirit, and the religious information presents itself to us as a revelation of God. The principal ideas of this Revelation are: Creation; the Fall

of Man; the consequent corruption of the whole human race; Grace and Redemption. All these facts are far above the comprehension of the natural man. Hence the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures, is alone able fully to understand and properly to interpret them. Therefore this Spirit must animate the interpreter. The spirit of the interpreter must be in full harmony with the spirit of the author.

At the same time this spiritual element must ever be kept in proper condition and limits by the Grammatico-Historical element. The Scriptures must be received and considered for what they really are, according to strictly historical faithfulness, for the apprehension and preservation of the historical and human side of the Biblical content as a whole. This is necessary for the Church herself, in order that she may safeguard the soundness of her faith and doctrines. It must always be remembered that in some respects the whole content of the Sacred Scriptures is something historical, and that therefore it has its human side. The eternal supernatural facts have entered into the conditions of human apprehension, and it is this human element, consisting in the many extensive passages of apparently little or any vital importance to saving knowledge, and the great inequality of the Biblical authors in form and contents, which requires the most scientific and careful interpretation.

In expounding the Scriptures the mystery of the inner life reveals itself. The Scriptures actually become a tribunal to the interpreter, which will either approve or condemn him. Whoever is not already in possession of the principal substance of Holy Scripture will necessarily be put to shame. Neither intelligence or skill will avail anything if the spiritual eye is not sound. The declaration of the Apostle Paul that the natural man is unable to apprehend and understand the things of the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 2:14) is found to be perfectly true in all doctrines and precepts taken singly, as well as in the general truths of Scripture and their application. Hence the relation of the inner life to the objective truth, the internal, heartfelt direction toward it, and an intrinsic connection with the proving and judging Spirit of the Scriptures, is of decisive importance in all and every exposition of the Bible. This is

substantiated by the fact that all the changes in Exegesis have originated in the shifting of the position respecting the principal interests of life. It is therefore wrong to suppose that the changes in Exegesis are the result of Scriptural interpretation. Such is not the case. The changes always occur in the general knowledge of human objectives and desires.

On making an examination of the mutations in Exegesis we find that the allegorical form of interpretation was the first to gain ascendancy. Origen erected it into a theory, and his theory was used throughout the Church. Allegorical interpretation presupposes, or takes for granted before hand, that besides the verbal sense there is still another, a higher meaning in the word, or words, of Scripture. And the Scriptures actually contain passages which must be understood in this manner, especially in the Old Testament. There is a symbolical meaning in many of its customs, institutions and usages, as in circumcision for example. The heart is to be circumcised, and not the flesh. (See: Deut. 10:16, Deut. 30:6, Romans 2:28, 29). Much in the Prophetical sayings is symbolical. The highly figurative language in chapters 65 and 66 of Isaiah is the expression of a spiritual glory of which he must have been conscious, but purposely treated his material in this peculiar way. The spiritual germ of the contents would be lost if the symbolical character of the Old Testament history were disregarded. A great part of the Biblical material also has a mystical signification. Without the recognition and acknowledgment of this fact the Bible can never be understood. The changeable relation of the soul to God, as presented in the Psalms, is very mysterious. Everyone can feel the presence of this element there, but who can express what is really intended? It is therefore to be presumed, and can easily be proved, that there is material here for allegorical interpretation. But the interpreter's presumption must be limited to the portions in which the allegorical element is evident. Had the allegorical interpretation been confined to this limitation it would have retained its earlier authoritative position, but by being applied to whole books indiscriminately, and by losing sight of the historical element because only the

idea was sought after and valued, it became productive of many grave errors and had to lose its hold upon the Church.

In a general sense the allegorical interpretation may be called symbolical, while in a special sense it may be called typical. The Typical interpretation has reference to certain representations of former times, which can find their explanation only in fulfillment. Thus in Romans 5, Adam is represented as a type, and Jesus Christ as the antitype. Adam was the image of all that had been lost, and as such he already pointed to Jesus Christ, the Restorer. In like manner the sacrifices recorded in the Pentateuch were considered to be temporary signs which pointed to a coming, all-powerful redemption from sin. This is proved to be true in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The validity of the Typical interpretation is found in the real existence of a spiritual bond of union between the entire contents of the Old and New Testaments. The principle of Biblical religion runs through all phenomena, and whatever life, in word, action and suffering, has sprung from this principle and its contest with the world, is the product of one and the same Spirit. Hence we have reason to presume that word and action must agree. Indeed, all those phenomena are so many degrees of development, which stand intrinsically related to the appearance of Christ as the highest and most perfect among them. All is completely fulfilled in Him. He is the concrete reality of all Bible truth, in word, symbol and type. But in explaining types we must not take it for granted that the sacred writers were always fully conscious of their meaning. Not the thoughts and consciousness of the recording subject, but the typical significance of the object presented, must be interpreted. Where this rule is not observed the Typical interpretation becomes unreliable and dangerous.

There is also a Moral, or Tropological, interpretation, according to which Holy Scripture, besides the Literal, possesses another sense which refers to obligations and duties. This also has its true side, which is found in the general practical tendency and productiveness of the contents of the Bible. Nowhere do we meet with mere speculation or mere knowledge without nourishing food for the practical life. Hence the prac-

tical exposition must have its place, especially in those portions of Holy Scripture which indicate a practical tendency. But even where the practical relation is not at once visible, the character of the subject-matter may be practical. It is the expounder's duty not merely to apprehend the objective truth, but also to indicate its practical relation, even where this is not given, for this relation belongs to the complete apprehension of the object. It is never sufficient to represent a truth as a mere object of knowledge, nor can it be properly and fully understood unless it is apprehended in connection with the real interests of life. The Tropological exposition, however, becomes false and dangerous as soon as the expounder tries to invent a practical relation where there actually is none in the objective representation. This often occurs in sermons, in which the text is made to offer a number of practical inferences that really do not exist anywhere else than in the mind of the speaker.

There is an element of truth in each one of the methods of interpretation which have been mentioned, and they may be used with perfect safety provided that the erroneous tendency which lies in them is properly held in check. And the same may be said of the Verbal mode of interpretation, which in its exclusive application takes for granted that in every passage of Scripture there is only one sense. This has led some Theologians and many common people to the conclusion to make use of no other means of interpretation than the Bible itself. There are ministers at the present time who profess to draw their sermons directly from the Scriptures, without the assistance of a single theological work. However we have already seen that we find not only the verbal, but also the symbolical, mystical and topical elements in the Scriptures, which dare not be ignored. The use merely of the simple verbal sense must destroy all imagery, all pictures of fancy, such as are by nature common to all human speech. Though it is true that in every recorded utterance there is sometimes only one sense to be acknowledged, yet great caution must be exercised in determining the truth contained therein,

The Philosophical mode of interpretation, which has been

so extensively employed in this century, is objectionable principally on this account, that it acts entirely against the true idea of interpretation, because it takes its position outside of the Scriptures. Its presuppositions externalize the content of the Bible, and something is brought in entirely foreign thereto. Nevertheless there is an element of truth also in this mode of interpretation. It gives to the expounder a rational, logical insight into, and a clearer judgment of, many dark passages. In the case of apparent or seeming contradictions, it enables the interpreter to discover and remove them.

The opposite of this is the Traditional, Churchly interpretation, developed and sanctioned by the Catholic Church, and bound by the *regula fidei* of her tradition, the *Decreta Conciliorum*, *Concensus Patrum*, *Praxis Ecclesias*. This mode of interpretation evidently contradicts the true idea of the art. It is a fact that this churchly interpretation may be traced back to Irenaeus, who was its first scientific exponent and advocate. He and his followers took it for granted that the doctrine of the Church was of Apostolic origin, as well as the Scriptures, and that therefore they could not contradict each other. We have already seen that such a *regula fidei* contains a measure of truth. But is not too much confidence placed in the certainty of tradition? Who is able to prove satisfactorily that this *regula fidei* did actually originate with the Apostles, and that it was nothing more than the pure result of Apostolical tradition? Even if we were to take it for granted that at the time of Irenaeus the *regula fidei* contained nothing but truth, it could not do justice to the historical peculiarities and individual manifoldness of the Biblical books. Because of this insufficiency the principle cannot be regarded as the highest, and as the only authentic guide to truth.

Over against all the modes of interpretation we have mentioned, including the Traditional principle, we have also the Spiritualistic interpretation, in which the so-called inner light plays a conspicuous part. Those who hold this principle maintain the true maxim that Holy Scripture, in which the Holy Spirit dwells, can be expounded only by one who himself possesses this Spirit. But a grave error attached itself to this prin-

ciple. Its advocates ignored the historical character of the Scriptures, considering them to be simply an emanation from God, which fell from the lips and pens of men, without partaking of anything essentially human. Thereby they make of man merely a mechanism, a passive instrument of communication. The deceptive character of this principle lies in the fact that it leads its subjects to imagine themselves to be filled with the purely Biblical Spirit, while at the same time there is not, and cannot be, an agreement among them as to what that Spirit really is. Lacking the guidance of an historical element and character, no one is able to determine whether he has the true Spirit or not, for there are many spirits that have gone out into the world, and St. John counsels us to prove these spirits, whether they be of God (I John 4:1). This can only be done by means of language and history, or in accordance with the Grammatico-Historical rule,


Having seen, now, that all the different modes, or principles, of interpretation used in the Church successively contain certain elements of truth which dare not be set aside, but that each and every one of them is defective in being too narrow and one-sided when employed alone, we are naturally led to inquire after the true principle. And here, as intimated once before, we arrive at no other conclusion than this, that the Bible is to be expounded with the constant application of all the Hermeneutical principles, in their fixed reciprocal action and reaction upon one another. The Grammatico-Historical is the first and fundamental principle.

The written word of the Bible must be viewed as the expression of facts of thought and feeling, of which the writers were not mere unconscious organs, but which were realized in a human manner in the human spirit, and also set forth in the same manner. Therefore the Bible is to be expounded as all such realized facts of thought are expounded. As a matter of course the hypothesis and interest, of which we have spoken before, must be at hand. It is to be presumed that the Scriptures as a whole are intended to awaken, nourish and perfect the spiritual life in man; that the Divine Spirit in the Scriptures speaks to, and unites Himself with the spirit of man, and

that in this Spirit the Scriptures have their unity. By the Spirit in man we understand the tendency of the soul toward God, the striving of the soul after God as the highest good, the seeking of God with self-conscious aspiration, the longing for righteousness, the search for God's grace, and the striving after Eternal Life in His communion. Thus we learn that the Holy Spirit is the principle of all religious life, and that no one can make a proper presupposition respecting Bible Truth unless he stands firmly grounded in the Spirit.

The principle and highest rule may therefore be stated in this way: When with the application of all the general hermeneutical principles stated in former lectures, the sense of a passage has been discovered and determined, so that it can be proved on grammatical and historical grounds, then this sense alone is to be accepted as the true one, and all interpretation, consideration and application must be deduced from this, its historical definition. But its real content and power can be understood only by him who apprehends it in the spirit of one saved through Christ, and who values it in the interest of the Christian Church. Only then is the sense of a passage fully explained when not only the nature and ground of its agreement with all other passages already defined, but also its difference from them, has been so apprehended that the unity of the Spirit, who reveals Himself in the Scriptures, is not destroyed thereby.


The Application of these Principles to the Work Itself

ACH AND EVERY one of the principles now set forth has a claim upon the interpreter. For, as we have observed before, it is necessary for him to remove everything that may stand between him and any sacred writer, to identify himself with him, and yet to maintain his consciousness of the existence of the real difference. This elimination requires: First, knowledge of the means of communication, namely, language; Second, knowledge of both subject and object, that is to say, knowledge concerning the author at the time he wrote, which requires information relating to the author and the history of his work, as well as ability to form a supposition or an hypothesis in case historical data are wanting, and to discover the connection and principal tendency in a document; and Third, a proper reverence for the Bible.

In addition to what has already been stated in regard to the subject of language, I will only add that the Bible was written in three languages, the Hebrew, the Chaldee, and the Hellenistic Greek. Besides this there are some words of Egyptian and Persian origin in the sacred text. Dr. Johann L. S. Lutz says that we may distinguish a period in which the Hebrew language appears in completed form, with its peculiar development, and another period in which a different dialect had entered and corrupted it. This was the Aramaic dialect, mostly used in the prose parts. All this must be fully understood by the interpreter, and it is his duty to use every aid at his command, in order to obtain the true and full meaning. He is in conscience bound to employ all suitable traditional means, such as the punctuation and accentuation of the Old Testament, the exegetical works of the Rabbins, the ancient versions of the Scriptures, and the expositions of the Christian Fathers.

By means of the proper use of language and of traditional helps, the interpreter must connect the apprehension and application of the context in which single words of pivotal importance are found, and by which their meaning and purpose become more or less plain. In many instances the narrower context already gives sufficient light. But where this is not the case, the more extended context of a whole book or epistle must be consulted. We have already referred to the indispensableness of these hermeneutical agencies. They serve to fathom the sense, and also lead to a surer knowledge of the significance of single words. Moreover, they extend their usefulness to other and larger parts of Holy Scripture.

Catechetics and the Heidelberg Catechism

 HE HISTORY of the Heidelberg Catechism directs our attention back to a period when the Christian Church was agitated to its very foundation. This agitation had grown deeper and wider ever since the memorable year 1517 A. D., when Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland had boldly proclaimed the Gospel doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the Papal doctrine of justification by good works. But the contest existed not only between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Among the followers of Luther themselves a deep-rooted and wide-spread dissatisfaction had rapidly developed, was agitating the Christian mind in every country, destroying the peace and harmony of the people, and thus threatening in some parts to annihilate the new church. This was especially the case in the Palatinate where the peaceable followers of Philip Melanchthon were fiercely denounced and persecuted by hyper-Lutheran preachers.

In this deplorable condition the Church was found when Frederick the Third, born in 1515, entered upon the government of the Palatinate in the year 1559 in consequence of the death, without issue, of the Elector Otto Henry. Though reared in strictly Catholic surroundings, he early formed a close relationship with the renowned Albert Hardenberg, and through him, or through John á Lasco, he was won over to the Evangelical faith, in which his pious wife, Maria of Brandenburg-Baireuth, supported and confirmed him. He regarded Luther as a distinguished instrument of God, but did not consider him to be infallible. Neither did he want to be called a Calvinist, because he had not been baptized into Calvin, nor into any other man, but found his comfort alone in the merits of Christ.

Frederick began his government as a friendly, meek and pious prince, seeking with all his might to advance the glory of

God and the temporal and eternal welfare of his people. His clear mind and blameless morality, his unwavering faithfulness and restless activity in behalf of his beloved subjects, shone forth with a bright light and cast an imperishable lustre upon his life. Everyone received an irresistible impression of his simple, heartfelt piety, which was the fundamental element of his being.

Two years after the death of his father, Frederick moved from Simmern to Heidelberg where Telmann Hesshusius, the Lutheran zealot, was at that time engaged in agitating the people to such a degree that Frederick found it necessary to compel him to leave the city, and in his stead to call men to the university who could be trusted. Among these new teachers there were two, Ursinus and Olevianus, who have immortalized themselves by the authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism. The former was twenty-eight and the latter only twenty-six years of age when they entered upon their important duties in the University of Heidelberg. Ursinus had been educated to a great extent by Melancthon and had imbibed much of his mildness of spirit, while Olevianus had been trained in the school of Calvin, and was full of the master's glowing zeal. To these well-prepared instruments Frederick III. entrusted the preparation of a catechism that might, with the blessing of God, bring peace and harmony to his subjects. In a few months the difficult work was accomplished, and so successfully that the Heidelberg Catechism has now for more than three hundred years stood preeminent among all the symbolical books of the Reformed Church. Dr. Goebel justly says: "The Heidelberg Catechism may in the proper sense of the word be regarded as the flower and fruit of the entire German and French Reformation. It combines Lutheran warmth, Melancthonian clearness, Zwinglian simplicity, and Calvinian fire, and is therefore the only common confessional and doctrinal book of the entire Reformed Church, from the Palatinate to the Netherlands, from the East of Europe to the far West of America."

In the Autumn of 1562 the manuscript of the Catechism was presented to the Elector, who himself had watched the progress of the work with the deepest interest and had also

actively assisted in its construction. In the month of December, 1562, the Elector called a General Synod for the purpose of making a thorough examination of the Catechism, and on the 19th day of January, 1563, he subscribed his name to the introduction which had probably been prepared by himself, and thus perhaps only a few weeks later the whole book was presented to the public.

But the Catechism had scarcely made its appearance when it became the object of such fierce and shameful attacks that we at present can form no proper idea of them. Catholics and Lutherans rivaled one another in denouncing this precious jewel of the Reformation. Frederick III. was so firmly persuaded of the Gospel truths set forth in his Catechism that he manfully defended it against all enemies. A long list of complaints against Frederick was laid before the Diet. He asked that he be granted a few moments for consideration, and in fifteen minutes he gave the following answer to the accusations:

“I am still of the same opinion, as I said to your Majesty before I left the room, that in matters of conscience and faith I acknowledge only one Lord, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and I say therefore that it is not simply a cap full of flesh which is at stake, but the soul and its salvation, entrusted to me by my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and which I am obliged and ready to preserve unto Him. Therefore I cannot grant unto your Majesty the right to command and govern this soul, because this belongs to God alone, who has created it. . . . As far as my Catechism is concerned, I am not ashamed to confess its contents, especially since it is so well fortified with proofs from the Holy Scriptures that it cannot be subverted, and I hope, with the help of God, that it will not be overthrown hereafter. Besides, I console myself with the fact that my Saviour Jesus Christ has given to me and to all his faithful ones the assured promise that whatsoever I shall lose for the sake of His honor or name, shall be restored to me an hundredfold in the world to come. Thus I commend myself most obediently to the grace of your Imperial Majesty.”

This joyful confession made such a powerful impression upon all who were present that the Elector August of Saxony approached Frederick with the kind declaration: "Fritz, thou art more pious than we all!" And the Margrave of Baden is said to have made the avowal to those around him: "Why do you assail this prince, for he is more pious than all of us are!" From this time forward, and as a consequence of the Elector's fearless and happy confession, the Reformed Church as a whole enjoyed the unquestioned right to exist in Germany. In the Reformed countries the Catechism was received with great joy and found ready favour in all the Reformed congregations that had been formed along the banks of the Rhein. The first general synod of Julich-Cleve-Berg and Mark, in 1610, passed the resolution: "That as they had done in the past, so they would in the future hold the Word of God to be their only rule and guide in faith and doctrine. In the second place they held that the sum and substance of the Word of God has been well expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism, and therefore directed that this Catechism was to be used as hitherto in the schools and in the churches."

Many efforts were put forth to popularize the Catechism as a church-book of the noblest kind. It was ordered to be read in prescribed sections, or parts, to the congregations. The reading of such a part occupied nine Sundays. In the sermons frequent reference had to be made to the Catechism. Even regular sermons on the Catechism, on Sunday afternoons, were introduced, and to this end the Catechism was divided into fifty-two *pericopes*. In some places the whole congregation was catechized, or examined, by the minister, after the sermon or lecture had been delivered. In the University professorships were established for the purpose of giving instruction regularly in the Catechism to theological students. In short, efforts were made from all sides to indoctrinate the whole Church in the Catechism, and to attain this object it was made the text-book of public instruction and public confession, a fountain and basis of the common knowledge of Christianity.

The Catechism was not confined to Germany. Having been conceived and born in the Melancthonian and Calvinian

spirit, it entered at once upon its journey around the world, because its genuine Gospel truth and spirit were called of God to spread as far and wide as Christianity itself. In the Netherlands the Catechism was received with open arms, and the theologians there were full of its praise. The Synod of Dort in 1618-1619 most solemnly adopted it as their confession of faith. Also England, Scotland, Switzerland, France, Hungary, and Poland accepted the Catechism, and in 1619 it was brought to America by the Holland settlers of New Amsterdam, now known as New York. With the exception of the Bible, no book found at that time so extensive a circulation as our Catechism. In an era when the Bible had been translated into only forty languages the Catechism was already being published in seventeen.

But there have also been times when the incomparable value of the Catechism was lost sight of, when almost every preacher believed himself to be able to construct even a better confessional book. Thus the congregations were flooded with productions of this sort which lived scarcely as long as their authors. At such times as those we experienced in America in the early part of the present century (the Nineteenth), the fanatical New Measure spirit caused many of our ministers and people to regard the Catechism as being altogether insufficient to satisfy the religious wants of the multitude, and therefore not only worthless, but actually injurious to the cause of Christ. Happily these evil tendencies have always been checked in their disturbing and destructive career. The consciousness of the comfort contained in the Catechism has always outlasted the efforts to remove this confessional book from the memory of the people.

Whoever approaches our venerable teacher, the Heidelberg Catechism, with a sincere, inquiring mind, must see and feel that its aim is to make us conscious of the highest interests of mankind, and to bring us into full possession of the one thing needful. For this purpose it first directs our attention downward, deep down into the abyss of the apostasy from God, and the terrible reign and results of sin. Then it leads us

upward to the very throne of Heaven, from whence God in His mercy has sent salvation to our souls. The first word of the Catechism is like the sublime prelude of an organ in which the hand of a master comprehends everything which the further progress of divine worship, the singing, prayer, and preaching, each in its own way, brings to completion. The fundamental tone of the whole book concerns man's only comfort in life and in death. This chord is touched upon every page, and through all the leaves this melody resounds. In such sacred simplicity, in such overpowering greatness is this melody here composed that we justly place it side by side with the highest productions of the human spirit, and quietly drink in its heavenly music. Let us therefore attentively consider the first question: "What is thine only Comfort in Life and Death?" "That with body and soul, both in life and in death, I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil, and so preserves me that without the will of my Heavenly Father not a hair shall fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him." *

In this first question and answer we have, in simple language and small compass, the deepest and grandest conception of the entire plan of salvation: Man with his ever returning want of comfort in life and in death on the one hand, and the Triune God with His all-sufficient supply on the other, just as they have been, and are, represented in the book of eternal

* Throughout his ministry, both as a pastor and a teacher, Dr. Herman Rust revered the Heidelberg Catechism. He frequently said: "The Heidelberg Catechism is an inexhaustible fountain of divine truth, and therefore a young man who thoroughly memorizes the text of this confession of faith and masters its teachings will be able to preach the Gospel without dearth to the end of a long life-time of service in the Church." Above all he loved the first answer. He considered it to be the key to the whole Confession. He said that the essentials of the Gospel are contained in the first answer in the Heidelberg Catechism.

truth itself. If we ponder the nature and condition of man in the light of revelation and experience, we can see him enter upon the stage of life with a cry for comfort, and all through childhood and youth, through manhood and old age, there are a thousand causes from without and from within, which press him to seek and to sigh for comfort. When sure hopes are disappointed and fond expectations blasted; when tender affections find no response, and cold, cruel treatment causes the heart to bleed; when health begins to fail, and death spreads desolation all around; yes, when the voice of the Spirit whispers within: "Adam, where art thou?" and the conscience is aroused by the sad experience of sin and guilt, and the sentence of condemnation resounds from the just tribunal of God, what else can be expected from a poor, helpless sinner than the heart-rending cry: Oh, where shall rest be found—rest for my weary soul? This world wide, all important fact was deeply impressed upon the minds of the framers of our Catechism, and they have given searching and proper expression to it at the threshold of their glorious temple of truth.

But in apprehending and representing man in his ever recurring want of comfort, they did not forget the blessed fact that there is a balm in Gilead, and an all-powerful physician who is ready to administer the needed consolation, provided that the sinner complies with His conditions. Not in the thousand and one objects of the world, such as men are apt to imagine and present, can the real comfort be found, because all these things are changeable and therefore can never give real and abiding peace. The question is for *one* comfort that shall remain unaltered in power though everything else perishes, and which shall never lose its soothing light, neither in days of prosperity, nor in days of adversity, neither in health nor in sickness, neither in life nor in death.

This heaven-born, all-victorious comfort consists in the realized fact that we know ourselves to be the rightful property of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has purchased us with his precious blood. And belonging to Him, we are delivered from the bondage and condemnation of sin and of the vanity of this passing world.

The Decadence of Faith



ALL DEGENERATION and separation spring from the distraction and perversion of the God-given religion. The original life union of man with God having been lost, men are unable to understand one another. Hence country rises against country, nation against nation, and one system of worship against another. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." (Romans 1:24; I Timothy 6:3-5).

The true religion, on the other hand, has from the beginning brought forth, and at all times produces unity and life-union, the Church, among those who live in the Covenant with God. (I John 1:3; Ephesians 4:4, 5; Acts 2:42). Sinful man is brought back again into this communion of the true religion and of salvation when he permits himself to be determined by the Holy Spirit, to give up his own arbitrary, selfish and perverted life entirely, and to live in God's holy truth. (Matthew 16:25).

This self-resignation of man to God, the Lord has effected not only *once*, by creating him in His image, but also, after the entrance of sin, by all His providential and gracious operations intended to re-establish the interrupted life-union. To this fact the whole Old Testament, and especially the history of the chosen people, bears abundant testimony. "For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee forever: And Thou, Lord, art become their God." (II Samuel 7:24).

Such a continuous, ever interfering and direct operation of God upon the human race was indispensably necessary for the restoration, preservation and furtherance of the true religion. Unquestionably man might have obtained all kinds of notions respecting God from Nature, conscience and history; but in no wise would these so-called natural means have been sufficient

to restore and advance the true religion. Their imperfect manifestations cannot illumine the heart, cannot change man and convert him to God. This is proved by the fact that the insufficient directions of nature are left unnoticed, are misinterpreted and abused by him. (Romans 1:19-25). The successive order of God's inclinations in spirit and life toward His creatures runs through our race from its very beginning. By means of chosen instrumentalities God's operations for the removal of the sin-effected separations among men, and the preservation of the true religion of the Covenant are coursing in an uninterrupted current through mankind. The true religion, the covenant of man with God, is completely restored and entirely perfected for all nations and ages in the incarnate Saviour of the world. In Him, the God-man, we have the absolute conclusion of all the gracious inclinations of God toward us, and of all His operations for our union with Him. Beyond the moral and spiritual grandeur presented in Him to the human race there is nothing higher or more perfect. In Him we have the all-saving truth and the whole of salvation. No other and no better Gospel can ever arise. No other foundation can ever be laid. He alone is for all men the way, the truth, and the life. (Acts 4:1; I Cor. 3:11; John 14:6).

But we must ever penetrate more deeply into Him, into His truth and life. We must increase in height and fruitfulness in Him, the Head of humanity. This is accomplished through His promised Spirit, but not by new, extraordinary impartations, and much less by purifying and perfecting that which has been given in Him. The increase follows only the way of the Lord: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16:13, 14).

It is therefore the office of the Holy Spirit, on the one hand, to preserve the perfect divine Truth, given in Christ and through His inspired Apostles; and on the other hand to reveal to us the mysterious meaning and power of salvation as He draws it from Christ, in order that thereby we may grow

more and more in the knowledge of Divine Truth, which considered in itself is not capable of improvement. Hence the Apostle says: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10). But he also adds: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 11:8, 9). In His operations and the impartation of His truth, salvation, and life, God unfolds His own nature, and gives Himself to his creatures.

The creation of man in the likeness of God consists in this, that his understanding and reason were illumined by God's light, pure and full, his heart filled with the love of God, and his will directed by God, all to the glorious end that he might live happy in union with God and to His praise. (Genesis 1:27; 5:1; Acts 17:28). Consequently religion is the greatest gift of God and man's most precious treasure. It is the fundamental condition, the light, power, and crown of Heaven-pleasing and blessed existence. To be a man in the highest and original sense of the word is possible only under the divine influence of true religion. The extermination of religion would necessarily imply the extermination of man himself. "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17). "For what maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:17). "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

With the appearance of sin man's covenant life with God has become distracted and perverted. In this perversion, in the selfish nature of sin, all false religions and religious opinions have their source and animating power. For all false religions, not only of single individuals, but also of whole societies and

nations, are the fabrications of sinful man, mere caricatures of the true religion. The principal heathen national religions which appear upon the pages of history are these:

I. The Chinese religion, originally a most simple service of nature, which gradually progressed to a sacred veneration for, and worship of, ancestors, especially of the Emperors as the fathers of the nation and of the people.

II. The Indian religion with its three hundred and thirty million deities, all of which proceeded from the original Being, the so-called Arch-Brahma, who is in himself the creating, destroying, and preserving power, Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu.

III. Buddhism, which knows of no personal God and leads men to seek their own destruction.

IV. The religion of the Persians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians, and Arabians, consisting essentially in the worship of the stars.

V. The religion of Egypt, which has given a particular god to every day and month of the year, who rule the destiny of all persons born on any particular day, a religion in which animals and plants are worshipped as the bearers of deities.


VI. The religion of the Greeks and Romans, which consisted in the humanizing of divine things.

VII. The religion of the ancient Germans, which was also a worship of nature, associated with Polytheism, and made everything depend upon an absolute fate.

VIII. Mohammedanism, which is a religion of pleasure on the one hand, and of cruelty on the other; decidedly a religion of the head, and therefore satisfied with absolute resignation, Islam, and the righteousness of works.

These broad fundamental truths of Revelation, and the age-long fact of the misery of man, naturally and logically lead to the inquiry concerning the mission and agencies of the Church, the Means of Grace, the training of the young, the deepening of faith in the followers of Christ, and the extension of the blessing of Redemption among the peoples of the earth. Upon these subjects Dr. Herman Rust possessed definite conclusions and firm convictions, as the following writing shows.

The Church, the Sacraments, Catechetics and Missions

HE BAPTISM of infants, as well as of adults, is the reception into the visible Church and admission to her blessed privileges (Segensbereich). It is also the bestowal of a special gracious relation with Christ which may in a certain sense be called a regeneration and a change, just as the baptism of proselytes before the time of Christ was called a regeneration, and as in the time of Christ the emancipation of a slave by the Romans was called regeneration. But baptism by itself, without the hallowing influence of a truly righteous, exemplary and interceding family, in conformity with the baptismal vow, does not produce a new active life in God, neither in infants nor adults, as experience proves. It does not yet bring forth a new, regenerated creature to whom the words in I John 5:4 may apply: "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" and also I John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God."

But though infant baptism is not the perfect regeneration which brings about a new spiritual nature and a new spiritual mindedness in the children, yet the great majority of Christian Denominations believe it to be right to baptize children, contrary to the view and practice of the Anabaptists. The reason is that Christian parents look upon themselves as being the property of Christ and therefore cannot do otherwise than to bring their children early to Christ, consecrating them to Him as His sanctified possession, according to the teaching of St. Paul: "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (I Cor. 7:14). Christian parents not only have the right, but it is also their duty, to dedicate their children in baptism to Christ, and thus to give them to Jesus, the Redeemer, as His property, without waiting for their free consent

(*Willensentscheidung*). And they may be certain that the Lord Jesus who blessed the unconscious, unbaptized Jewish children (Mark 10) will also bless their own little ones from the beginning and fashion them into temples of God. For the Grace of God always makes the beginning, in order that man may then follow. A child of Christian parents is to grow up as a Christian child and to stand in the covenant-grace of a Christian family. (Psalm 103:17, 18; 22:10, 11; 71:6; Acts 16:31-33). And as a baptized child it is from the earliest infancy to be encouraged to entrust itself to Christ as its Saviour, and by faith in Him to have grace, the hope of Heaven, and courage in death.

In the case of Christian children who early follow this drawing of the Father in Heaven, who early pray to Jesus and love Him, and who, notwithstanding many struggles, do not by intentional sinning purposely withdraw from Him, it is not to be expected that they shall be conscious of the time and the circumstances of their regeneration and conversion, and still less is this to be brought about by artificial questioning and urgency. As they grow up into the conscious love of their parents, so they also for the most part grow into the conscious grace and love of Christ. Only he who considers this gradual process to be impossible, by which in all probability most of the Christians in Germany have come to a living faith, could reject infant baptism. But those also who have from childhood up been led by the Holy Ghost still stand in need of the Gospel truth: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," (John 3:6), to show them clearly, and cause the truth to penetrate their souls, that only by regeneration through water and the Spirit and by a living faith in Christ, does man enter into the Kingdom of God. Such preaching brings men to self-examination and to a conscious life in justification and regeneration. Otherwise such souls stand in danger of remaining contented in a feeble natural Christianity, and may never become true witnesses of Christ. Therefore it is also of great benefit to them to see and to experience the zeal of persons who were revived and converted in riper years.

Leading men in the Reformed Church in Germany, as well as many strictly Lutheran professors and preachers abroad, as for example, Ludwig Harms, speak urgently of the necessity of regeneration on the part of baptized persons who lead ungodly lives. Therefore it is to be lamented that in modern times a number of Lutheran theologians assert that regeneration takes place only in baptism; that all baptized persons are real members of the Body of Christ, and that it is wrong to say to ungodly baptized persons: *You must be born again*, because they have only to be converted to their baptismal regeneration. No other exposition is sustained by the proof of the Spirit of power and truth so strongly as the interpretation of Saint John 3:3, *You must be born again, or you are lost*.

Moreover wherever in Germany awakenings and conversions have occurred, this passage has always been one of the most potent and penetrating. Where men are told that John 3:3 does not apply to them any longer, there numerous revivals and conversions have never taken place. Experience abundantly proves that for God-forsaken baptized Christians, for Heathen, and for Jews there exists only one way to salvation and to sonship with God, namely, the path the jailor followed, and this is the way of salvation and regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ. When an unconverted man tells us that he was regenerated in baptism and that he for this reason cannot be born again, we must answer him by saying: Then you will be lost irredeemably, because without regeneration you, a carnally minded creature, cannot possibly enter the kingdom of God.

By teaching that all baptized persons are regenerated children of God, the clear Biblical distinction between the children of the world and the children of God is erased. (I John 3:3-10). The dignity of the child of God is thereby lowered, if it is taught to believe that baptized godless persons are also children of God. Regeneration into sonship with God through the firstborn from the dead, Jesus Christ, is the principal doctrine of Christianity, and surely by such a mistaken understanding of the word "regenerated" or "regeneration," the Gospel is robbed of its heart-searching power. Precisely this insistence

upon a personal experience of justification and regeneration in such a manner, namely, that without this experience no one has the right nor the ability to speak about Christian essentials, preserves the churches from, and protects them against, Unbelief and Rationalism, and the false faith of Romanism.

The Church, the Ministry, and all professing Christians stand in a similar relation to the celebration and administration of the Lord's Supper. The following words at the beginning of the Third Epistle of St. John, verse two, were addressed to his friend and brother Gaius: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The language is a transparent proof of the sincere love of the Apostle, and of his concern for the souls of other men. At the same time it impresses us with the fact that Gaius himself was in a very good spiritual condition, and that the state of his soul and his entire fellowship with Christianity were a source of great rejoicing to the Apostle John. Hence in the light of this incident the important question naturally arises: *What is the condition of our own souls?* Would the Apostle be able to give the testimony concerning us which he gave to Gaius? Could he express the wish that in all things it might be as well with us otherwise as it is with our souls?

The great mistake all natural men make, and for which many of them will suffer eternally, is that they disregard the soul entirely, do not value their own souls nor care for them; that they are much more concerned about the perishable body, the mere earthly home of the soul, than they are about the soul itself, which is created for eternity and empowered with all kinds of wonderful gifts and abilities. This they suffer to starve and to be ruined! Alas, in this respect the children of God often imitate the example of the people of the world in their walk and conversation, living as if they had no souls to save, in defiance of their perfect knowledge to the contrary, utterly indifferent to the call they have had from darkness into light, and wickedly heedless of their deeply touching experiences in heart and soul.

What belongs to the health and prosperity of the soul? We answer: Genuine regeneration. Every unregenerated soul is sick. But in such temper of heart and frame of mind

many professing Christians, who in the eyes of men must be considered to be regenerated in the full sense of the word, are admitted to the Lord's Supper. Concerning the exceptional conditions which sometimes result from bad and negligent management of churchly activity we may speak hereafter. In respect of such persons, the unregenerate and spiritually defective, the activity of the Church is directed toward the support and development of the new man, the man who has been born again in so far, namely, as the Church has been and is able to contribute to his development and growth. The substantial feeding of the new man is obtained by the regenerate from Christ Himself. The Church can do nothing further than to administer the sacrament to him with which Christ has associated this feeding.

Besides this it is the duty of the Church to strive to keep him in a penitent and believing disposition, for the constant continuance of repentance and faith is necessary in order that Christ, implanted in him, may grow and obtain a proper form (Galatians 4:19). The new man must become master and conqueror over the old trunk into which he has been grafted, namely, the residue of the old Adamic nature. A peaceable dwelling together of both is impossible. Either the old man is crucified, or the new man will be choked by him. As little as Christ implants Himself magically in any person without the presence of the subjective receptivity, just as little does He nourish the new man magically. The penitent and believing disposition must continue. This is the condition upon which alone the growth of the new man can take place.

But now repentance continuously and daily renewed in faith and in the state of Grace, or the daily negation and crucifixion of the old man, together with the daily renewing faith, and consciousness of adoption, that is to say, the daily vivification of the new man, is nothing else than sanctification, or as it is called in Titus 3:5, "The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The activity of the Church in respect of the regenerate will therefore be directed to the support of their faith and sanctification by means of the living preaching of the Gospel, and the Law, but the Law as presented

to us in the Gospel, especially in the example of Christ and His sufferings. Since this activity aims to give to the new man a permanent character and form, we will call it once for all the metamorphic, the edifying, promoting activity.

An unconverted person is also still unregenerated, and upon him the Church expends her metanoetic activity. But he may stand in a twofold relation to her. An unregenerated person is certainly a natural man (*ανθρωπὸς ψυχικὸς*, I Corinthians 2:14), and this is true also of the baptized child, which, as far as it is the object of Church activity, that is to say, according to its inner life, its thinking and knowing, is after its baptism still ignorant of the salvation offered by Christ. Nevertheless, everyone must see that there is a vast and essential difference between a baptized child and an adult Heathen or Jew, between those who do not yet believe and the unbelieving. The natural man, namely, can assume his relation to the Church in two ways: First, as he is in his inborn individuality, or, Second, as he has developed himself under the influence of his own *σὰρξ*, and the influence of unchristian surroundings, having thus already become a personality. In the former case the new born child is at once placed into a certain relation to the Christian Church and her activity. The child is a personal being as well as the adult, but it is not yet a personality. It has personality in the abstract sense; it is personal; but it is not yet a personality in the concrete sense, describable as an important, a great or small, a noble or bad personality. Man becomes a personality in the concrete sense only through the cooperation of three factors, namely, his native individuality (natural talents), his own self-determination, and the influences of his environment. The child becomes a personality in such a degree as by means of instruction it obtains the possibility of placing itself in a certain relation to the external world, and of acquiring knowledge for itself, maxims, views, tastes, tendencies, and so on, which necessarily demand self-determination and self-development. As a child it is at first only an individual, having only latent talents and inclinations to one thing and another, and as such it participates in the beginning only in the general consequences of the Fall of man, namely, in original sin, that

is to say, selfishness and the inborn special inclination toward this or that particular sin, but not in the historic particular consequences of sin. It is not yet infected with the God-opposing prejudices, false opinions, ungodliness, immorality, and so on. In a word, the evil within is still at the lowest mark of intensiveness and extensiveness. The child is not yet a Christian, but by no means is it unchristian or antichristian. Thus it at once comes into connection with the Christian church. In baptism it receives the right to the pardon of sin wrought out by Christ, but also the beginning of a regenerating, sanctifying influence of Christ upon its being, and with this a claim to a Christian education in respect of its noetic side. Christian education, however, is twofold in character. First it is a training in the narrower sense, as it proceeds from the parents and belongs to the Christian life. As such it has the task to limit the growth of evil, and by discipline to keep down the natural man to the lowest possible point. In the second place, it is Christian instruction, that is to say, instruction in the Gospel, begun by the parents as a part of their Christian life, then continued and completed by the servants of the Church as part of their churchly work. The object of this instruction is to acquaint the child with the Word of God, with the historical record of the fact of salvation, and to lead it into the *μετάνοια*, or life of renewal. Christian training in the narrower sense, or Christian discipline, stands related to Christian instruction as does the Law to the Gospel, or as in the childhood of humanity Moses stood related to the Prophets. It is evident, however, that Christian activity is closely interwoven with the Christian life and springs forth from it. How abnormal and wrong it would be should the Christian child only in its eighth or tenth year begin to receive the first instruction concerning God and His Son Jesus. In such a case the parental education would be directly unchristian, and the child would develop itself analogous to a heathen child. Christian education and Christian discipline are from the very beginning associated with Christian instruction and with the Word of God. And all this is inconceivable without worship and prayer. The father and the mother, therefore, as far as they begin to impart Christian

instruction, themselves stand in the service of the Church, for they have the ministry of the divine word in the congregation of the home. Nay more, the *ministerium verbi* which the servant of the Church as catechist has to exercise toward the growing child, does not differ essentially from the Christian instruction which parents are in duty bound to give to a small child. In short the problem of Catechetics is essentially nothing else than Christian instruction in general. The word of salvation in Christ is to be made plain to the child and brought home to the mind and the heart, in order that the desire for salvation may be awakened, that faith in the accomplished salvation may be kindled, and that the catechumen may be led to make confession of his repentance and faith as a condition of his reception into the communing congregation.

Churchly Catechetics, according to its fundamental form, is didactic, but it does not exclude the Christian pedagogics of the family. It aims at the *μετάνοια* of the heart, the conscious and sincere decision for faith in the Person and Word of Christ. It is different with the individual natural man, who has already unfolded himself into a personality before he enters into relation with the Christian Church. This is the case with all those individuals who grow up outside of the Christian Church, and whose noetic conscious life in thought and will develops under influences vastly different from the content of a Christian education. This takes place in Judaism, Heathenism, and Mohammedanism. Here the individual, before the Church comes into contact with him, has already acquired a store of knowledge, views, maxims, tastes, tendencies, and so on, which are the result of his peculiar surroundings. But this surrounding is positively erroneous, unchristian, or even antichristian. Hence the character of such a personality has developed under the power of blindness. The presence of evil is no longer at the lowest point, the minimum line, of extensiveness and intensiveness. A person who grows up in such an environment is not only not a Christian, but is also already unchristian. The task here is not alone to combine instruction in the Gospel with a Christian education, but especially to remove the results of a positive unchristian training. And since those errors, lies,

immoralities, vices, and so on, have become firmly fixed, they will offer an earnest resistance which can only be conquered by an opposing influence of corresponding power. The only power superior to the power of falsehood is the power of the Gospel. In order to overcome the hostile might of error a mere process of instruction is insufficient. Acts of self-sacrificing love must accompany the mission-work of the Gospel. From this it follows that the difference between catechization and mission-work is not merely external and accidental, but highly elemental and essential, manifesting itself plainly in the method. In the former case we have the given basis of a Christian power which the pliant mind of the child, with its yet undarkened conscience, assimilates. In the latter the given basis of activity is an unchristian power, from the bondage of which the more or less hardened mind, with its darkened conscience, is to be liberated and rescued.

The metamorphic activity of the Church differs from the metanoetic in this respect that the latter has no other ground in the unconverted subject than the natural human gifts, talents, experiences and conscience, while the former has for its connecting point the realized, objectively substantial implanting of Christ in man, namely the *αναγέννησις* (regeneration). But this, in its unfolding, is attached to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the sacramental acts instituted by Christ, and these are congregational, fellowship, or communion acts. Hence the metamorphic activity moves upon a congregational basis, having for its object not the man in his separation from, but in his connection with, the congregation. Therefore the metamorphic activity in this respect is entirely opposite to the metanoetic.* The metanoetic activity meets man as an isolated single individual who has not stood under any particular influences. And when it does not meet him in this unwarped state, when it meets him as one who has already grown into a Heathen, a Jewish, a Mohammedan society or communion, it

* According to Sir William Hamilton all those cognitions which originate in the mind itself are called *noetic*. The term *metanoetic* is broader and relates to the noetic influence of social environment.


must first extricate him from this evil association, first isolate him and lead him back in his conscience to the omniscient Presence and the supreme judgment seat of God. It can do nothing with him until he has permitted himself to be isolated, or until he has been led back into his inmost isolation, his misery. Only then does its positive work begin, whose object is to lead him into the communion of the Church, the congregation, to help him, to induce him to make a joint confession of faith in Jesus.

The metamorphotic activity on the other hand finds a man in the state into which he has unfolded through his approach to the common confession of membership in the congregation, and as such no longer stands alone. It has to operate first and foremost, therefore, upon the congregation in the unity of the common life of faith, and only from this basis will it be possible to operate upon any single personality in respect of particularities and peculiarities. Thus we have here two principle activities: the *cultus*, in which the churchly activity takes the individual as a member of the congregation and aims at the cultivation of the joint or common Christian life; and *the care of souls*, in the second place, in which the churchly activity tries to build up the single personality according to individual peculiarity, and to purify and sanctify the same.

Should one now place the *cultus* upon a parallel with the missionary activity, because both have to deal with communities, and would parallel catechization with the care of souls, the proceeding would be very superficial and arbitrary. It has been said with good purpose that the two principal metamorphotic activities are similarly, yet not fully analogically related, as are the two metanoetic principles. It is true that the *cultus* has to do with an historically originated congregation, and the mission-work with an historically originated communion, namely, with Heathenism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and so on, while catechization does not deal with a congregation, but with single personalities. Yet this analogy is very superficial. Internally considered Catechization has a much closer analogy with the *cultus* and with mission-work than with the care of souls, as everyone's own immediate feeling will tell him. As the cate-

chist is confronted with individuals who are not as yet developed into determinate personalities, so the cultus is confronted with men from the kingdom of sanctified humanity, with members of the congregation, and in like manner has not to deal with single developed personalities as such, but rather according to that side of the Christian life, that is to say in its congregational, its community expression, in which all regenerated persons are like one another, having to go the same way of salvation. As the mission work on the other hand has to deal with developed unchristian personalities, so the cure of souls has to deal with men who are developed into Christian personalities. Therefore in Catechization as in Cultus a majority of individuals may be taken together for purposes of instruction, while the missionary cannot convert whole crowds at one time, but like the pastor, must labor with every single individual and person separately and in particular. These four activities, all of them, are church activities, organically associated with, and ceaselessly springing forth from, the divine life incorporated in the Church, the Christian fellowship and communion.

New-Measurism

N CONTRAST with this extended presentation of the historic position of the Reformed Church concerning the character of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, the meaning of the Sacraments, the object of Catechetics and Missions, the following fragment is appended to the doctrinal elucidation to show the attitude which Dr. Herman Rust maintained toward so-called wildfire methods to propagate the Christian faith and the Christian religion. He says:

This somewhat startling statement from the pen of Rev. S. Z. Beam, D. D., is found in a recent number of the "Herald of the Interior" (January, 1893): "The educational system of the Reformed Church has been sadly neglected, and in many places within the bounds of our Ohio Synod it has been supplanted by the 'New Measure' and 'High Pressure' method so foreign to the genius and spirit of our beloved Zion. As a result the distinctive character of the Church of our Reformed Fathers has been either entirely lost or kept out of sight, and we present to the world the anomalous spectacle of a Church professing one system of faith, and practicing another which is altogether foreign to its methods and practices."

I have tried to find a negative or contradictory reply to this humiliating statement, but failed in my effort to do so. There are so many living examples which can be adduced to prove the truth of the assertion that it would be useless to offer a denial. The only complaint I might raise is this, that the writer has localized the evil in the Ohio Synod, whereas it is found to be more or less in evidence in all parts of the Church. Half a century ago almost the entire church of Pennsylvania had been set on fire by the hell and damnation sermons which at that time were preached against educated ministers, or machine preachers, and book-confessions, and our venerable Catechism was publicly denounced as the greatest obstacle to vital piety.

If at that time Dr. Nevin, the Great, had not risen up in his might and boldly aimed his "Heidelberg Brickbats" at the confused and confounding heads of the raving fanatics, our noble symbol of faith might by this time have completely vanished from the memory of men.

If the esteemed author of the article alluded to, or anyone of his readers, should come to the conclusion that Heidelberg Theological Seminary is the cause of this widespread neglect of our educational system, he would make a grave mistake and do great injustice to the professors. All the young men who have finished their theological course here, have been obliged to memorize and study the Heidelberg Catechism, and have finally obligated themselves to conduct their ministry in accordance with the educational system contained therein. But a large number of the young men came from charges in which the emotional and high-pressure method was in full favour. Hence that method had their first love and it was therefore in some instances utterly impossible to awaken any interest in them in our educational system. And then they were often invited, even before their licensure, to assist certain high-strung preachers in protracted movements, or meetings, for an increase in membership, and in their honest aspirations to please they would choose some sensational subject for pulpit treatment. Then they would present it with such Ciceronian eloquence and in such pronounced sophomoric eulogistic style that good natured old ladies, expert judges of sermons and sermonizing, would afterwards assure them that better sermons had never been heard in the church before. This kind of admiration and tickling of the ears has induced many a young man not only to neglect his studies, but also to draw the false conclusion that the "new measure" and "high pressure" method is more effective than, and preferable to, the tedious and laborious process of making believers by means of catechetical instruction. Thus the neglect of our educational system, and the consequent confusion incident thereto, have propagated themselves from generation to generation, and God only knows where it all will finally end.

SUPPLEMENT

Sure of the content of Truth as set forth in the symbol of faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, on the basis of Holy Scripture, the educational system certainly is the ideal and the normal channel in which the life of the Church ought to move to permeate the whole of mankind with the conscious saving power of Christianity. But it appears, as time passes by, that actual conditions in human society, the ignorance of, and the estrangement from, the unadulterated truths and consistent experience of Christianity on the part of vast masses and multitudes of people call for and demand an organized Evangelistic activity of the Church on a grand and enduring scale. Dr. Herman Rust was in full sympathy with this profounder conception of the mission of the Church, and with this larger grasp of her duty to the unnumbered multitudes in the passing years, who, both in the churches and outside of them, do not know God, who have not tasted the love of Jesus, live in sin and iniquity, and are confronted with the possibility of dying in moral misery and utter despair. He believed in the true Evangelism of the Christian Church, her ministry and her people, the Evangelism equipped with wisdom, understanding, thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, the unfeigned gift of the Holy Spirit, and consecrated spiritual power.

The Value of Church History

NATURAL and easy it is for a parent to speak to his family, for a pastor to preach to his own people, and for a professor to deliver lectures to the students under his immediate instruction because he knows their wants and can adapt himself to their capacities. But it is not so easy to deliver a suitable lecture to comparative strangers, especially on a subject in which the great majority of people are very little interested. And such a subject is Church History on which I promised to speak to you tonight. This does not say, however, that the subject itself is destitute of importance and interest, or that it is incapable of popular, instructive and entertaining treatment. On the contrary there are very few subjects in which the human mind can find such rich treasures of edifying, soul-stirring knowledge as in Church History. If you want to see the good, the true, and the beautiful in their greatest possible perfection as realized among mortal men, turn to the field of Church History where living examples of shining virtue, unfaltering devotion and angelic love will meet your eyes in countless numbers. Indeed we find here not only the highest achievements and noblest works of men, but also the wonderful providential and gracious dealings of God with the human race all exhibited in the history of the Christian Church.

Here we are permitted to behold the gradual preparation of the divine plan of salvation until it reaches its completion in the bursting forth of the new creation in Christ, the center and source of all life and blessing. And here we learn how this heaven-born new creation, this Kingdom of God, made its way rapidly into the hearts and homes of men, how it entered into daily conflict with the powers of darkness and vanquished them all, and how it marched onward, from city to city and from country to country, filling the nations of the earth with light, hope and joy. No wonder, therefore, that many of the greatest and best men of all ages have found their chief delight in the

study of Church History. Nor is it strange that they should have studied for thirty, forty, or even fifty years without exhausting the subject, or growing weary of it, because Church History presents an inexhaustible mine of important and attractive facts or events, and many a single one of these events is amply sufficient to occupy the attention of the student throughout his life-time.

Take for example the practical subject of missions. Examine its origin, nature, and design, its power and progress in the days of the first great missionaries, and the wonderful changes which followed its blessed work. Trace its operations year after year, century after century, among all the different races of men. Study the spirit and changing zeal with which it was carried forward, the character and motive of those who were at different periods and in different countries instrumental in its propagation, and the various causes which led to its success among some people and brought about its failure among other communities, and you will find that there is more than sufficient in this one branch of Church History to occupy one's mental and spiritual activity for many years.

Or let us take the scientific branch of Dogmatics, which also belongs to Church History, although it has of late been treated independently. Every doctrine has its own process of development, and since its development was the work of the Church, therefore it belongs properly to the sphere of her history. This branch is so extensive and rich in subjects that not only the doctrines themselves, but also the *history* of these doctrines has been collected from the field of Church History and organized as a separate study. But while this is a fact, and may be considered legitimate for the sake of systematic order and convenience, both the doctrines and their history must forever remain embodied in the general history of the Church because they constitute an essential part of her inmost life and experience. Where could the nature, power and importance of the doctrines be more clearly and fully apprehended than in their natural historical connection with the organic development of the Church? The abstract study of Dogmatics may indeed enable us to understand the different doc-

trines, but the reasons *why* they are what they are; the process of long and fierce controversy through which they passed before their present character and form became fully fixed; the great importance attributed to them; the vast amount of mental, physical and spiritual labor, as well as blood, expended in their settlement, and the incalculable power and influence exerted by these doctrines upon the entire body of the Church, all this can be learned only from the pages of Church History.

In studying these doctrinal controversies we are confronted with some of the greatest and best men of past ages. Their mighty power of reasoning, by which they penetrated the deepest mysteries, removed all difficulties, and finally vanquished every opponent, challenges our admiration, while their unwavering firmness in their doctrinal positions fills us with reverence and love. The world can boast of many heroes on the battle-field, whose memory is justly honored, but I venture to say that not one of them all is as much entitled to our grateful remembrance as are those Christian heroes whose time and talent are wholly devoted to the propagation of the doctrines of the Gospel and saving faith.

However the history of doctrines is only one of the many subjects which belong to Church History. In this vast field of human action our attention is claimed by the subject of Church Government, by Symbolics, Public Worship, Liturgics, the Papacy, Monasticism, Archaeology, Patristics, Scholasticism and Mysticism, the Sacraments, Hymnology, the Arts and Sciences, Religious Life and Morality, Judaism and Heathenism, besides a great many other important and instructive branches of investigation and study. All these subjects are so extensive and significant that on every single one of them certain great theologians have spent many years of diligent labor. Hence it is not to be wondered at that Neander, the father of Modern Church History, devoted nearly the whole of his lifetime to writing on these different subjects and yet reached only the Twelfth Century, and that Dr. Philip Schaff, in twenty-five years of assiduous literary application, reached only the Tenth Century. God grant that he may live long enough to complete his task all along the way, into the living age.

To show the students what interesting subjects claim our attention in Church History, I will give a brief sketch of one of the Fathers of the Byzantine or Greek Church.

One of the doctrinal controversies to which I have referred took place in the former part of the Fourth Century, reaching its preliminary or first settlement at the Council of Nice in 325 A. D. It was afterwards more fully concluded at Constantinople in 381. In consequence of this long spiritual contest the religious life of the Church had greatly suffered and hence stood in need of a powerful revival. For this purpose the Head of the Church raised up the proper instrument. In the renowned city of Antioch and in the year 341 a Roman captain (*Magister Militum Orientis*) and his noble Christian wife, *Anthusa*, were blest with their firstborn son, to whom they gave the name John as a sign that he should become a soldier of the cross. The father soon afterwards died, and the young mother, who was only twenty years old, solemnly vowed at the grave: "I will continue to love thy son, and to him I will devote my whole life!" This vow she kept faithfully to the end of her earthly career. She instilled into the tender mind of her son the sweet truths of the Gospel, and the child by his upright conduct justified the brightest hopes.

In his thirteenth year the lad was sent to the school of the celebrated sophist *Libanius*, a heathen, who tried his best to further the development of the young man's great talents, hoping that he might some day enjoy the keen pleasure of seeing *John* worship at the altars of the gods. Nor was this hope altogether unfounded. Being passionately fond of all that is good and beautiful, the Grecian poets, orators and philosophers filled him with the liveliest admiration and caused him to imitate and if possible to excel them. Soon his exercises in declamations and orations evinced such a power and beauty of eloquence that his teacher became joyfully amazed. The brightest prospects for a high position in the Forum were before him. But while *Libanius* endeavored to raise his successful pupil to a high place of honor in the world, the anxious mother followed her beloved son with prayer and supplication. And her blest influence proved to be more powerful than all the glittering

splendor of worldly greatness. He soon became disgusted with the deceptive art of oratory which was employed in the forum merely to obtain the applause of the multitude. Hence he turned away from the profession of the Law, and in company with his friend *Basilius* applied himself with undivided zeal to the study of God's Word. Most happy was the mother who considered this turn in her son's life to be a plain answer to her many prayers.

Having now forsaken the places of public amusement and attending divine worship regularly in the church, it was not long until Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, became deeply interested in him. John presented himself for baptism, and in the year 370 A. D. he was made reader of the Holy Scriptures in the church. He would much rather have joined the monks in the mountains because he loved solitude and spiritual entertainment. But his dear mother urged him with tears to remain in his appointed place, saying: "Do not widow me a second time. Postpone what you intend to do until I am gone!" Alas this event filled his heart only too soon with the profoundest grief. The Lord called the precious guardian angel away from his side, and this caused him to follow the long cherished desire of his soul. John went into the mountains and the pious fathers and brethren received him most kindly. The solemn devotions, the singing of Psalms, the sacred studies and meditations, as well as the cultivation of the garden and field, were all exercises in which he found delight, and there he felt perfectly happy.

He spent six years of rich spiritual enjoyment in this monastic life. But during the last two years of this period he lived in a dark cave and then his health began to fail, and this caused him to feel it to be his duty to respond to a call to the diaconate in the church at Antioch. Not being privileged to preach, he devoted himself unreservedly to the care of souls among the poor and the sick. Besides this he presented the congregation with many excellent devotional books, and among them with his own work of superior merit on the priesthood, in order to make the people conscious of their high calling in Christ.

However the office of deacon did not enable him to unfold the treasure of his spiritual gifts and powers to the full extent because he was not permitted to preach the blessed Gospel, the real element of his life. God opened the way. The Bishop, *Meletius*, was removed by death, and his successor *Flavianus* consecrated the earnest young deacon in the year 386 A. D. a presbyter. The very first sermons which he delivered in his new office made such an extraordinary impression upon the people that they all freely confessed they had never before heard such powerful and convincing discourses. Presenting the golden apple of truth in the silver vessel of classic language, with the eloquence of a Demosthenes, his auditors became enraptured and lost their self-possession in excited admiration. And though he repeatedly entreated them to abstain from the heathen custom of giving vent to approbation or dissent, yet the electric sparks of his utterance kindled the feelings of his devoted hearers and caused them to interrupt him again and again with boisterous applause. The power of his sermons consisted chiefly in fullness of thought and convincing argumentation, clothed in a lively, sweeping and impressive manner of delivery. In consequence of his sweet and captivating language he received the significant name *Chrysostomus*, or Golden-mouth. And this is indeed a very appropriate distinction. Speaking of himself, he says: "I preach like the flowing rivers though there should be none to drink their waters."

Chrysostom was not permitted to prosecute his labors very long in peace. In the year 387 Antioch became the theatre of a wild rebellion whose cause was the imposition of new taxes by the Emperor. The street lanterns were demolished, the public buildings were stormed by the infuriated mob, and, to render themselves fully guilty of treason, the statues of the Emperor were cast violently to the ground amid shouts of defiant blasphemy. . . . The revolt was soon checked by a legion of brave soldiers who took bloody vengeance not only upon the guilty, but also upon the innocent. Alas for the poor Christians! Their individual lives were in danger and the whole congregation faced the possibility of being scattered to the four winds by the enraged soldiers. Then Chrysostom

came forward in the full armour of the Holy Spirit and delivered his twenty homilies "On The Statues," which are probably unexcelled in the literature of the pulpit. The excited multitude became quieted under his prophetic voice. They were induced to send the bishop on a mission of pardon and peace to the Emperor, and Theodosius granted them both. "Why should I not forgive the people of Antioch, my fellow servants," said he, "since our Lord solicited pardon even for His murderers."

The fame of Chrysostom now spread over all the empire, and when the Bishop of Constantinople died, he was secretly carried away from Antioch and in the year 398 A. D. placed in the patriarchal chair. In view of the reigning sensuality and moral corruption among all classes of society Chrysostom at once instructed the lower clergy in the duties that would thereafter be expected from them as ambassadors in Christ's stead, and then gave them the brilliant light of his own example in all things. In vain did the courtiers seek to draw him into their society, and fruitlessly did they invite him to feasts and banquets. Without fear or favour he unveiled the moral corruption as he had found it among high and low in the proud imperial city. His sermons had the same powerful effect as at Antioch. Thousands flocked to hear him, and hearing, applauded him. It became a common saying that through the magic of his sermons he tamed wolves and tigers and changed them into meek and friendly lambs.

But his bold denunciation of sinful pleasures aroused enmity against him, especially at the Court. His greatest enemy was Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria (385-412), known in history mainly by his participation in the Origenistic controversy, who envied him his high position. This orthodox rascal instigated the calling of a Synod at Chalcedon where Chrysostom was falsely accused of heresy, tried and condemned. Then the Emperor, influenced by gross falsehoods, was induced to banish him for life. "Let the ocean roar," said Chrysostom to his weeping congregation, "the rock on which we stand it cannot wash away. Let wave be piled upon wave,—the ark of Christ in which we are sheltered will never sink! What am I

to fear? Death? Christ is my life! Banishment? The earth is everywhere the Lord's! The loss of earthly goods? I have brought nothing into this world; what can I wish to take out of it? I despise the terrors of this world and laugh at its glory!"

The same night, after his departure, the whole city was terrified by an earthquake and this led the Empress Eudoxia to recall him. But his enemies did not rest. Having preached against the excesses of the Court and the populace at the dedication of the silver statue of the Empress, Chrysostom was accused of having said: "Herodias again rages. Again she dances and institutes the dance. Again she burns with desire to have the blood of John in a vessel!" Applying these words to herself the Empress induced her husband, the Emperor, by the action of a Synod, to banish him forever. The statue of the Empress was erected near the church of St. Sophia. The enemies of Chrysostom, with the help of the Emperor and Empress, declared the restoration of a certain other synodically excommunicated bishop, and exiled the man they hated to Bithynia, then to the desolate city of Cucusus on the border of Arminia, and finally to Pityus, a city on the Eastern shore of the Black Sea. But Chrysostom never reached the place. He died on the way, in the neighborhood of the city of Comona in Pontus, on September 14, 407. Thirty years after his death the Emperor Theodosius II. removed his bones with great solemnity to Constantinople.

The address on the value of Church History ends here. It seems to have been left unfinished, perhaps because of an interruption, and was never taken up again. Therefore one cannot determine just what further lessons, if any, Dr. Herman Rust sought to have his students and auditors draw from the strange and wonderful career of *Johannes Chrysostomos*. It was not his purpose, this is certain, to encourage even the monastic principle, and much less to commit himself to the institution of the priesthood which Chrysostom endorsed and helped to extend, because he made the false class distinction between the spiritual order and the worldly station, an error which lies at the foundation of the whole catholic hierarchy.

These are not the lines in the life of Chrysostom which Dr. Herman Rust aimed to emphasize. No doubt his purpose was to commend the unselfish, consecrated and heroic ministry of the great bishop of Constantinople as an example worthy of imitation through all succeeding centuries. Moreover the fact lingers in my memory that my father honored and revered the career of Chrysostom especially in the light of his oratorical genius, as his frequent allusions thereto indicated. He often said that Chrysostom was as great a master of the *homily* as has ever lived, and pointed to him as an exemplar in that peculiar and difficult form of Scriptural exposition. Then, too, the greatness of the man viewed from every side always commanded his admiration, for in the history of Christianity the name of Chrysostom is imperishably associated with the names of Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, Ambrosius, and Augustine.

The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in the Light of the Nineteenth Century*

THIS SUBJECT is so extensive in scope and so rich in material that it would be presumptuous on my part to promise a full and satisfactory treatment of it in the short time allotted to me. I can only touch upon a few prominent points of general interest, which, I hope, will not be without some benefit to my hearers.

The question has often been asked whether the Reformation was really necessary and beneficial? The great body of Roman Catholic theologians from the start, and throughout the history since then, have given to this question a negative answer, maintaining boldly that the founders of that great "revolutionary movement" were not guided by the spirit of truth, but by their own sensual passions and arbitrary will. The great body of Protestant theologians on the other hand, have answered the question in the affirmative, proving the necessity by the previous corruptions and by the beneficial results visible in Church and State. When the Reformers commenced their labors they did not possess any clear idea of

* Dr. Herman Rust, in response to an invitation from the brethren in the East, prepared this address for "The Spiritual Conference of Ministers and Laymen," annually held in that part of the Church. He was about seventy-three years of age at the time and made the journey to Eastern Pennsylvania unaccompanied. He delivered the address on Thursday morning, August 7, 1890, in the Goethean Literary Hall, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa. Sixty-four Reformed ministers, five ministers of other denominations, five theological students and a number of laymen were present at the session. He met a great many former Mercersburg students and was so kindly treated that he returned to his home in Tiffin with a heart full of thankfulness and joy.

(The Life and Labors of Herman Rust, by his son, page 240.)

what they were about to undertake or sought to accomplish. Only by diligent and careful study of history and the Holy Scriptures did they gradually reach the conviction that the true idea of the Church, as intimated by Christ and defined by the Apostle Paul, was far from being realized in the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical organization. From the Scriptures they learned that the Church is the divine-human product of the Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ, made to take effect in the world through the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, under whose regenerating and sanctifying influence sinners are separated from the world and united together in a spiritual body of which Christ is the Head. But from history they learned that this exalted idea of the Church had early been lost because false doctrine, hypocrisy, unbelief and moral corruption had marred and defaced the noble virtues of the visible body of Christ. The divinely ordained union and harmony of the two tendencies inherent in all finite bodies, the one to unite and centralize, the other to separate and individualize, had been disturbed from the very beginning of the Church. And while at first the centrifugal or individualizing tendency had boldly commenced to tear asunder what God has joined together, the centripetal or centralizing tendency soon afterward entered upon a process of aspiration and aggrandisement which gradually brought not only the Church, but also the State, under its control, and thus caused the individual to be lost in the general, in the sum, the mass, the multitude. The Roman Papacy had finally arrogated to itself not only absolute power and control over all individuals and nations in this world, but also power and authority to reach across into the next world to redeem or condemn anyone, according to the good pleasure of the Pope. Christ was no longer the only head of the Church and the ultimate dispenser of divine and saving grace, but the Pope was exalted to an equality with Christ, and there was attributed to him the disposal of a treasury of superabundant grace, composed of the merits of Christ and His Apostles and the saints, from which he could supply all persons and peoples with a sufficient amount of salvation, upon the one and only condition of willing submission to his arrogant and despotic authority. Thus the true

Gospel idea of the Christian Church had been pressed out of sight by a politico-religious institution of unlimited pretensions. But the Reformers discovered also that all along the historical development of the centralizing hierarchical tendency there had been a lively consciousness of the perversion of the true idea of the Church, and that numerous efforts had been made to find and restore that idea by a thorough Reformation. The Montanists of the Second Century, the Donatists of the Third Century, and the Paulicians of the Seventh Century, together with the Cathari, the Waldensians, the Albigensians, the Brethren of the Common Life, and many other so-called heretical sects, seem to have been impelled to some degree, more or less, by a burning desire to discover and restore the true idea of the Church. That they held dualistic and pantheistic doctrines in connection with their one-sided and limited understanding of Gospel truth, no one will deny, nor can their persistent revolutionary efforts to poison the life of the Church with heretical elements be justified. Nevertheless it is certain that all those strange and threatening movements were so many loud providential calls of warning that the worldly-minded Church might be brought to self-consciousness of her vast departure from the true idea of her God-ordained character and mission, and might thus enter upon a reformation to save herself from utter destruction. But the grandeur of her political world-power had so blinded her eyes that she turned a deaf ear to all the complaints and prayers, warnings and solicitations that sprang from the anxious hearts of her own children. Imprisonment, torture, and death by fire and the sword were the only answer she had to give to them. Goodness and mercy had apparently been frightened away from the heart of the Papacy, a natural result of the intolerance and bloody persecution which had been practiced for so long a time. Even down to the Fifteenth Century this spirit of unrelenting severity and devilish revenge sought its savage-like gratification in the execution of God's own servants simply because they strove to restore the lost idea of the Church by searching the Scriptures and preaching the Gospel of Christ. This fact alone is sufficient to prove the necessity of the Reformation.

Moreover has not the Catholic Church herself acknowledged this necessity by successively calling three reformatory Councils? It was a universal conviction throughout the Church that internal and external improvements in head and members were not only absolutely necessary, but also possible, and that therefore they could, and ought to, be realized. But the bondage of their traditional system, in doctrine and practice, deprived them of the requisite freedom to commence and actualize a genuine reformation. Whereas the Council of Constance ought to have commenced with charity and mercy toward erring brethren, the great doctors of theology and law were so blinded and fettered by the cruel statutory condemnation and murder of heretics that they consigned the noble and heroic servant of God, John Huss, to the stake.

The Papacy having thus proved the absolute necessity of, as well as its own utter inability to bring about, a reformation, a just and righteous Providence had to prepare other instrumentalities through which to deliver the captive children of divine Grace from the awful bondage of the practices of systematized superstition and political oppression. And these instrumentalities finally appeared in the persons of the justly praised, but also profoundly hated and abused Reformers, who entered upon the stage of action without any preconceived plan or purpose in view. Only after the Holy Spirit, through the diligent and prayerful study of the Gospel, had enlightened their minds, and Christ had given them the sweet assurance of His saving Grace, did they become fully conscious of their divine calling to communicate to other poor sinners the God-given joys of salvation. And when they saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears the awful degradation of the Church, as exemplified by the grant of the traffic in indulgences, they could not restrain themselves from a determined opposition to such unheard-of abuses. Having experienced the forgiveness of sins by faith in the crucified and risen Redeemer, they could no longer bear to see the untutored and ignorant people robbed of their hard-earned money by such outrageous falsehoods. In the role of an auctioneer of churchly

ware, Tetzl, for instance, proclaimed from his desk in the city streets:

“When the money in the coffer rings,
The soul out of Purgatory springs.”

And when the Pope tried his utmost to silence the bold preachers of the universal priesthood and to prohibit the free, individual access of men to the Fountain of Grace, the hand of Providence protected the friends of the Gospel against the threatened violence. Prescott has well said, “Though none of the Reformers could claim such supernatural gifts as had assisted the first ambassadors of Christ in proclaiming the Gospel, yet the wonderful preparation of circumstances which disposed the minds of men for the reception of their doctrines, and the singular combination of causes which secured their success, and enabled men destitute of power and of policy to triumph over those who employed against them extraordinary efforts of both of these agencies, may be considered as no slight proof that the same Hand which planted the Christian religion, protected the Reformed faith, and reared it from a beginning extremely feeble, to an amazing degree of vigour and maturity.” Yes, indeed, the same Hand of Providence which planted the religion of Christ in the Apostolic Age was also the chief agent in the accomplishment of the extraordinary work of the Reformation. Anyone who cannot see traces of the divine finger in this grand epoch, will hardly be able to find God anywhere in the history of mankind. And such an one is entirely unfit to pass a truthful judgment upon the Reformation. It is for this reason that highly educated Catholic historians, such as Staudenmeier, Moehler and Janssen, have represented the Reformation as exclusively the work of ignorant, misguided, and positively wicked men, in order to communicate to their willing readers their own prejudice against, and hatred of, Protestantism. They claim to have written entirely from an objective standpoint, permitting men and facts to speak for themselves, while in truth their subjective intention and aim are visible on every page, and many sections might fitly have

been designated with the Jesuitical formula, "The end justifies the means." If such a process of dissection were applied to the character and life of their sainted men and women, as Janssen has applied to Luther and Zwingli and the other Reformers, their sainthood would vanish like smoke in the air. We know very well that the leaders of the reformatory movement of the Sixteenth Century were poor sinful creatures, liable to make mistakes and to fall into grave errors, and that their old Adamic nature in some particulars carried them beyond the limits of Gospel truth and righteousness, it would be vain to deny.

In their conception of the Deity, for example, they permitted themselves to be guided by the manifestation of His attributes in Nature, and especially by His direct Revelation in the Sacred Scriptures. From both of these divinely given sources they were led to apprehend Him as the Creator of all finite beings and the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. At the very opening of the Old Testament they found the sovereign justice of God in the sentence: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and His sovereign love in the promise of a Redeemer. This sovereign justice and mercy challenged their attention and faith in all the subsequent experience of mankind, even down to the fulness of time, when the sinless Lamb of God, as the voluntary bearer of our sins, had to realize the sovereign retributive justice of God in inseparable connection with the infinite sovereign mercy of His, and our, Heavenly Father. All this was plainly proved to them by the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, but especially by the obvious declarations of the Saviour and His inspired Apostles.

However in their deductions from this doctrine of God's sovereignty they were not always in harmony with Scripture and experience. In order to discover the proper relation between God and man, and between sin and grace, they carried St. Paul's doctrine of Election and Predestination to such an extreme that the freedom of man's will and his consequent responsibility were lost in the sovereign government of God. Man was fated not only to be a sinner, but also to commit the

sins which he does perpetrate. To this false and dangerous conclusion the Reformers were doubtless driven by the prevailing Semi-Pelagian Synergism, and the many evil consequences in doctrine and practice which they believed had been occasioned by it. To ascribe to man not only the freedom and power to permit himself to be saved, but even to commence the work of his salvation, without the prevenient grace of Christ, seemed to them to contradict the Scriptures and the experience of all truly regenerated men so grossly, that they felt it to be their duty to include in their monotheistic sovereignty the entire being and activity of man, the evil as well as the good. Reason and Scripture taught them that no created will can be independent of the Sovereignty of God, for if the created will were absolute, separate and independent, then the world could not be an organism, and there could be no general plan in it. All must be under the control of, and regulated by, the same all wise and almighty Providence. Hence we must hold that the activities and actions of the particular will are included in the divine plan, not absolutely bound, but in a free way. Man sins with the permission of God, but not by the freedom of his will, for if God had given him the freedom of choice either to obey or to transgress His law, there could have been no guilt, and the punishment inflicted upon man would have been cruel and unjust. It was not the use, but the abuse, of the freedom of his will which resulted in man's ruin. The original sentence, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," is still in active force all the world over. Wherever anyone eats of the forbidden fruit by transgression of the physical, moral, or spiritual law implanted in human nature, he becomes the subject of physical, moral, or spiritual death. The sin and transgression in every case are the work of man, but the punishment attached to the operative law is the work of God. All this was plainly seen by the Reformers, and therefore they were compelled in the premises to ascribe exclusive sovereignty to the all-embracing Ruler of the world. Melancthon, who at first had been foremost in asserting the doctrine of sovereignty, election, and predestination, subse-

quently tried to modify his views because the Semi-Pelagian enemies of these doctrines had, by their victorious advances, filled him with fear and trembling. He dropped the Supralapsarian Determinism which made God the author of sin, and altered also the Infralapsarian Predestinationism of Saint Augustine, and ascribed to the Human Will the limited ability to accept the proffered grace of salvation: *Mentes docendae sunt; agit aliquid liberum arbitrium*. Concerning this important incident Ebrard says: "Herein he (Melanchthon) was perfectly right. Already in his natural state, before his conversion, man has the freedom—never, indeed, to perform sinless works, much less to merit salvation by works—either to listen to the voice of conscience and the Law of God, to feel sorry for his sins and to fight against them, and thus to remain a salvable sinner (Romans 2:7), or wantonly to smother the voice of conscience and to fall into obduracy. Then in conversion itself the Holy Spirit certainly first works in the heart a feeling for, and a foretaste of the truth, glory and blessedness of the Gospel. But precisely with this He gives back to man the lost freedom of a self-decision, so that now it lies in man to follow the drawings of the Spirit, or to resist His influence. And finally after conversion and regeneration have taken place, there is no longer the abstraction of an evil will present in man, but a new man, born of God, has risen into action, who possesses the freedom either to crucify the old nature in the power of God, or through voluntary sins to suffocate the new man again, and thus suffer the shipwreck of faith. Melanchthon failed to emphasize the preceding work of the Spirit, through which the ability of self-decision must first be communicated to man."

Our own preceptor, Rev. Dr. John W. Nevin, one of the great lights of the Nineteenth Century, expressed himself on this subject as follows: "Although we are bound to hold and affirm the absolute sovereignty of God, as extending to all actions, yet on the other hand we must also hold that the actions of men are the product of their own free will. No man is forced by God's sovereignty to do evil. We would have no conscience if that were the case. God is absolute Sovereign,

and man is free to act. Both these propositions come to us as true because they are established in Scripture." Sin is punished by sin. It weakens the moral sense and is followed by blindness, and blindness again produces new sins. Thus an accumulation of sins takes place, not, however, by the direct agency of God, but by man himself. The greatest blessings of God are often by the perverted will of man turned into his greatest curse. One of the plainest and strongest statements concerning the justice and mercy of God which has come down to us from the Sixteenth Century, is contained in our venerable symbol, the Heidelberg Catechism, where, in answer to the eleventh question, it is said: "God is indeed merciful, but He is likewise just; wherefore His justice requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul."

Since this is one of the most prominent articles of faith upon which the blazing light of the Nineteenth Century has been concentrated with a great deal of dissolving force, we may well ask whether it is still worthy of our respect and confidence. It is well known that some very learned and pious theologians, overwhelmed and guided by the brilliant light of the natural and ethical sciences, have felt it to be their privilege and duty to publish articles and books filled with theories and doctrines by which the retributive justice of God is entirely set aside. God is represented by them as being essentially Love, infinite Love, and as such bound by His own nature to exercise love and mercy toward all sinners, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. No matter how depraved a man may be, just as David continued to love his wicked son, Absalom, in like manner, and in far greater degree, does God continue to manifest His parental love toward all, and every one, of His wicked and rebellious creatures. He must give them an opportunity even after death to decide in favor of salvation.

Theories of this kind are not new and startling to persons acquainted with Church History, where the most wonderful philosophical and theological speculations and fancy pictures of

possible truth are found in great abundance even from the Apostolic Age down through the centuries. We may venture to assert that nearly all the fundamental ideas developed by the so-called "New Theology" have been drawn from the Ante-Nicene period. The great mind of Origen was so prolific of novel ideas and theories that multitudes regarded him as a saint, while others abhorred him as a demon. Up to the middle of the present century our honored teachers taught, and sought to convince us, that "God is bound by His own nature to punish the sinner, even though he should feel sorry for, and repent of, his sins. Not because God delights in punishments, but because He is the absolute Law, He must and does require satisfaction. His feeling toward sin is not something fictitious, but real. And even if we sinners have an aversion to sin, how much more must that be the case in a holy and righteous Being. His justice is as absolute as His goodness; neither is it to be resolved into the other. The idea of God's vindictory justice would become something arbitrary if He were partial, or if He punished the sinner for His own pleasure. The punishment grounds itself at last in His love, which is the only fountain of all the other aspects of God's character. Out of the fullness of His love He must inflict punishment upon His rebellious creatures." This teaching was at that time considered to be sound doctrine by all the Mercersburg students, and as being entirely in harmony with the teaching of Christ and His apostles, as well as with the Confession of the Reformed Church. And notwithstanding all the plausible and captivating pleadings in favor of a modification, or change, of this position, I do not see any necessity for any deviation from the good old path.

The Sixteenth Century was intensely religious notwithstanding the many and deep corruptions of the Papacy. The piety and devotion among the common people was certainly great and sincere. As they had been instructed from infancy up, so they believed. To them the Pope was the head of the Church, with the power of the keys of Heaven in his hands, and a treasury of grace at his disposal. Hence childlike obedi-

ence to his directions and faithful attendance at the dispensations of the means of grace, especially the Mass, would surely bring them salvation. Being satisfied with this easy, formal, mode of religion, the Reformers at the first found it to be exceedingly difficult to convince the people of their error. In this popular devotion to the Mass lay the principal strength and support of the Papacy. Therefore all the bishops and priests, with firm determination, resisted the reinstatement of the simple Apostolical celebration of the Lord's Supper. In many parts of Europe the altars, with all their sacred utensils, had to be destroyed in order to eradicate the worship of the Mass. Being thus violently deprived of their staff of life, the chief and almost only food for their souls, the people in many places became desperate and swore vengeance against their over-zealous opponents, who on their part, believed it to be their right and solemn duty to remove everything that stood in the way of the establishment of simple Apostolical worship. Thus the great sacramental contest was inaugurated and continued throughout the whole Reformation period. Transubstantiation was proposed by the old party as the *conditio sine qua non* whenever the Evangelical party endeavored to advance the cause of their own simpler celebration of the Lord's Supper, until finally Transubstantiation and the Mass were unchangeably established by the Council of Trent.

But, alas, the same bone of contention, only under a different form, had long before this entered into the ranks of the Protestants, dividing them into two hostile camps, and filling the leaders at times with such bitterness that in the light of the Nineteenth Century they appear almost as having been devoid of divine grace to govern themselves. Although the champions on both sides held the Real Presence of Christ in the Supper, and the necessity and blessing of its use, so that they were in agreement concerning the essential fact, and ought to have been harmonized thereby, nevertheless in the effort to apprehend the mystery, and to explain the manner in which the sacramental grace is imparted, they drifted into interminable intellectual warfare about the words of institution: "This is

my body." The clear minded Zwingli saw from the very beginning that these words must not be taken literally, but in which part of the declaration to find the *tropus*, or figure, was at first dark to him, until the work of Gerhard Honius, *De Eucharistia*, led him to discover it in the word *ἐστί*, which he understood in the sense of *significat*. However since the idea of a means of grace would thus be excluded, he subsequently adopted the view of a spiritual eating of the Body of Christ, agreeing therein essentially with Calvin.

Luther in his earlier writings on this subject made the sharpest distinction between the sacrament and its substance, between figure and reality, and names faith as the mediating member between the two. Faith, the bond between sign and reality, is not only a sincere desire, but also an undoubted certainty, that just exactly as the sacrament says, so it will happen unto thee. Thus, then, the sacrament is a ford, a bridge, a door, a ship, and a letter, in and by which we are transported from this world into life eternal. On this ground the controversy might have taken a milder course, but from 1524 on Luther followed the example of the Catholic opponents, and treated the Swiss theologians with disrespect, calling them murderers of souls, who were leading the poor people to hell. He would rather have seen the restoration of the Mass than the adoption of the Reformed celebration of the Lord's Supper. This accounts for the frequently repeated expression that in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper the Roman Catholics are much nearer to the Lutherans than they are to the Reformed Church. Thus from the outstart an agreement was rendered impossible. (Herzog, Church History, Volume III., page 123).

It is well known that at the colloquy at Marburg all the exegetical, philosophical, and theological arguments advanced by the Reformed delegation from Switzerland, rebounded from the inflexible determination of Luther, who had written the words, "This is my body," upon the table before him, in the dust, to which he pointed with his finger whenever he felt the convincing force of their arguments. The whole disputa-

tion is fairly presented in the sixth volume of Dr. Schaff's Church History. Herzog's account of the event, as given in the third volume of his *Abriss der Gesammten Kirchengeschichte* (Erlangen, 1882), is also very interesting. When the Reformers met the last time, Zwingli, with tearful eyes, extended the hand of brotherhood to Luther, but Luther refused to clasp it, and said: "You have a different spirit from ours." Zwingli advocated the principle of unity in essentials and liberty in non-essentials. "Let us confess our union in all things in which we agree," he said, "and, as for the rest, let us remember that we are brethren. There will never be peace in the churches if we cannot bear differences on secondary points." But Luther considered the corporeal presence and oral eating of Christ to be a fundamental article of faith, and hence construed Zwingli's liberality as indifference to truth. "I am astonished," he said, "that you wish to consider me as your brother. It shows clearly that you do not attach much importance to your doctrine." Even Melancthon and the other Lutherans told them straightforwardly: "You do not belong to the communion of the Christian Church. We cannot acknowledge you as Christian brethren." Notwithstanding these insults the Reformed party joined the Landgrave in his request to Luther for the preparation of a Confession in which they could agree. Luther finally yielded and prepared fifteen articles, to fourteen of which they gave their ready consent. In regard to the fifteenth they stated: "We all believe concerning the Supper of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, that it ought to be celebrated in both kinds, according to the institution of Christ; that the Mass is not a work by which a Christian obtains pardon for another man, whether living or dead; that the sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of the very body and blood of Jesus Christ; and that the spiritual manducation of this body and blood is especially necessary to every true Christian. In like manner, as to the use of the sacrament, we agree, as in the case of the Word, that it was ordained by Almighty God in order that weak consciences might be excited by the Holy Ghost to faith and charity. And although at

present we do not agree concerning the question whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine, yet both parties shall cherish Christian charity for one another as far as the conscience of each will permit; and both parties will earnestly implore Almighty God to strengthen them by His spirit in true understanding. Amen."

But this did not end the deplorable strife. Luther continued with increasing animosity to oppose the Reformed adherents. "He called them heretics, hypocrites, liars, blasphemers, soul-murderers, sinners unto death, bedeviled all over." He even turned the blessing of the First Psalm into a curse in order to express his fiery wrath against them, saying: "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the Sacramentarians, nor standeth in the way of the Zwinglians, nor sitteth in the seat of the Zurichers."

When I first read the celebrated *Symbolism* of Dr. J. A. Moehler forty years ago, my impressions of the Reformation were somewhat modified, though I doubted many of the statements of the author. And in reading the great *History of the German People Since the Close of the Middle Age*, by Dr. Johannes Janssen, in which he allows the Reformers to reveal their personal inwardness by their own words and actions, I often silently asked myself the question, "How can that be possible?" And I doubted much of the testimony until I found that my second beloved teacher, Dr. Philip Schaff, in the sixth volume of his *Church History*, corroborates the same unpleasant revelations. It is not easy to conceive how so great and good a man as Luther was, could become so intolerant and abusive in language as to call his opponents a set of devils, and in his daily prayers to invoke the curse of God upon them. Only when we remember that it was customary in that day to use clubs and sledge-hammers to conquer, can we understand the form of the attack. It must also be remembered that the controversy involved the doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ, His divine and human natures and their relation to each other. Luther contended for the real objective presence of the body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and

wine, and therefore Christ was actually partaken of by all communicants. Zwingli on the other hand emphasized subjective faith as the indispensable means to the true enjoyment of Christ and all His merited grace. Both of these views were afterwards united by the great theologian Calvin in his doctrine of the Mystical Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and as given in our irenical Heidelberg Catechism.

For nearly four hundred years the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and their followers have stood the test of time, though often assailed with the bitterest determination to crush them out. But will they be able to maintain their place in the life of the Church amid the ever increasing brilliancy of the light of the Nineteenth Century? This is indeed a solemn question, and who is sufficiently prophetic to answer it definitely? The vast amount of charming and highly beneficial light which has been gathered from the great book of Nature has already made such powerful impressions upon the minds of many theologians that they have begun seriously to doubt the necessity of retaining any longer the doctrines enunciated and the symbols of faith produced by the Reformation, because the relations and circumstances, and consequently also the spirit and wants of the people, have so greatly changed, that modifications and alterations have become indispensable.

This plea looks so very plausible that many ministers, even in our own Church, have laid aside our venerable Symbol and have adopted doctrines and practices altogether foreign to our church-life, telling their people that the teachings contained in the Heidelberg Catechism were good enough three hundred years ago, but do not meet the needs of the present time. Others have called for certain eliminations and have publicly advocated the demand for new statements of faith. In other denominations whole groups of ministers, in assembly, have adopted solemn resolutions declaring that all infants are saved, thus rendering infant baptism superfluous. What consummate presumption! Could those preachers fathom the "secret Counsel and Will of God?" Perhaps they were swayed in judgment and doctrinal balance by the modern theory of "Evolu-

tion." We need not wonder that the secular papers made sport of them!

While we have great reason to rejoice because of the unprecedented progress which has been made in all the arts and sciences, and with thankful hearts ought to acknowledge the great illumination which has been shed upon the Church and the State in this Nineteenth Century, let us not hastily relinquish the firm foundations of our Fathers, the doctrines which they wrought out from the Scriptures midst fervent prayer and tears, by which they lived and died and entered into life everlasting.

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